



Washington State Fusion Center INFOCUS



MONDAY — 7 Nov 2022

	International	National	Regional and Local
Events, Opportunities Go to articles	11/07 Day 257 of the Russia invasion 11/07 Russia deepens ties w/NKorea, Iran 11/07 Challenges but Europeans stick w/Ukraine 11/07 Ethnic insurgents pressure Myanmar junta 11/07 \$billions short of 'fair share' climate funding 11/06 Day 256 of the Russia invasion 11/06 Ukraine nuclear plant power restored 11/06 Largest forced displacement since WWII 11/06 Russia top general relieved of command? 11/06 Russia suffers heavy losses east Ukraine 11/06 Ukraine: Russia 'brutality' eastern region 11/06 Russia forces intensify fight for eastern city 11/06 Kyiv preps for winter: no heat, water, power 11/06 US presses Ukraine openness to negotiate? 11/06 Public acceptance grows for Wagner Group 11/06 Russia declining prospect as arms exporter 11/06 Japan PM vows to strengthen military 11/06 Ex-PM Khan: march on Pakistan capital 11/06 China: no change to 'zero-Covid' policy 11/06 China warns Switzerland over sanctions 11/06 Iran protests in universities, Kurdish region 11/06 Somalia govt. pushback famine declaration 11/06 NKorea: missile tests practice attack South 11/05 Day 255 of the Russia invasion 11/05 Iran drones to become more lethal? 11/05 Iran admits: supplied drones to Russia 11/05 Russia law: mobilize convicts for military 11/05 Georgia booms as Russians flee Putin war 11/05 Russia troops loot Kherson ahead of battle 11/05 Putin's control Central Asia 'allies' unravels 11/05 China posts 6mo-high Covid count 11/05 CCP: Taiwan unification only way peace 11/05 NKorea launches more ballistic missiles 11/05 India travel risk: 5,300 bridges need repair 11/05 Italy closes ports to NGO ships 11/05 Russia, China block marine protection 11/05 Extended Kenya drought kills off wildlife 11/04 Day 254 of the Russia invasion 11/04 Fruitless: search for missing Russia troops 11/04 Russia ill-trained conscripts sent to combat 11/04 Spate of global assassination attempts 11/04 Impoverished NKorea funds testing spree	11/07 Worried about election violence? 11/06 Deadliest year for US-Mexico border 11/06 DHS paid 5-star hotel service for migrants 11/06 More employers 'ghosting' applicants 11/06 Experts: permanent DST will hurt health 11/06 Florida braces for hurricane by midweek 11/05 Can't make ends meet despite 2 jobs 11/05 Border numbers worsened in October 11/05 Destructive tornadoes rip thru 3 states 11/05 Wells running dry in drought-hit Southwest 11/05 Manhattan high-rise fire injures 38 11/05 Reports: alcohol death toll growing 11/05 Hospital flu cases highest in a decade 11/05 Settlement: FBI agent posed as reporter 11/05 Strategic Command: larger conflicts coming 11/04 New Covid variants are circulating 11/04 CDC: tough winter: flu, RSV, Covid collide 11/04 Domestic airline travel is about to get Real	11/06 Army conducts live-fire HIMARS training 11/06 Wildlife conference Spokane receives flak 11/06 Storm brings rain, wind, and flood warnings 11/05 Seattle dismal new revenue forecast 11/05 Gusty winds destructive trail North Sound 11/05 WSP concern: more collisions as DST ends 11/04 Constitutional sheriffs movement in WA 11/04 Seattle protest blocks ambulance w/patient 11/04 Hanford's nuclear past is a tourist attraction 11/04 WSDOT winter weather plan for I-90 camp
Cyber, Tech Awareness Go to articles	11/07 Medibank refuses to pay ransom 11/07 Japan joins key NATO cyber agency 11/04 Microsoft warns on zero-day spike 11/04 Link: FIN7 crime cartel to Black Basta 11/04 RomCom threat group expands reach 11/04 Robin Banks phishing back in service 11/04 Insurance giant settles NotPetya lawsuit 11/04 LockBit group threatens Continental leak 11/04 Yanluowang ransomware gang goes dark 11/04 Hackers target state-of-the-art observatory	11/06 Russia restarts trolls, bots ahead midterms 11/05 White House deleted tweet: violated law? 11/04 US seizes Z-Library ebook site domains 11/04 FBI: hacktivist DDoS attacks minor impact 11/04 Financial ransomware losses topped \$1.2B 11/04 Scams spike: student loan forgiveness plan	11/04 How debunked serial killer rumor went viral
Terrorism, Extremism Go to articles	11/07 Al Shabab attacks Somalia military base 11/07 Somalia prohibits use of name 'Al Shabab' 11/06 Somalia military training camp bombing 11/06 Somalia: fleeing militants in bomb attacks 11/05 Yemen military battle AQ stronghold 11/05 Militants abduct Niger Delta oil workers 11/05 UK right-wing extremism motivated bomber		
Suspicious, Unusual Go to articles	11/06 Melting glaciers yield secrets too quickly 11/06 UN: last 8yrs were 8 hottest ever recorded 11/06 WMO: climate woes bad, getting worse fast	11/04 Govt. pays tribes to move: climate change	11/06 SFD changed policy over fake complaint

Crime, Criminals Go to articles	11/06 Iran soldier kills 3 police, fellow soldier 11/06 Philippines bus bomb kills 1, wounds 10 11/05 Spain's largest seizure of marijuana 11/05 Activists glue selves to Goya paintings 11/05 Climate activists storm Amsterdam airport 11/05 Haiti police break gang blockade on fuel	11/07 Boston shootings leave 1 dead, 5 injured 11/06 Arizona election workers face threats 11/06 Philadelphia bar shooting: 9 wounded 11/06 Guilty plea: national fentanyl ring kingpin 11/06 Chicago club shooting: 1 killed, 3 wounded 11/04 Jails rife w/violence, abuse, overcrowding	11/06 Mental health services in jails worsen 11/05 Deputy-involved shooting in Bonney Lake 11/05 'Chaotic' shooting in Chinatown restaurant
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Events, Opportunities

[Top of page](#)

HEADLINE	11/07 Worried about election violence?
SOURCE	https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2022/11/07/poll-monitoring-election-violence/8270307001/
GIST	<p>On the eve of midterm elections in America – as Jan. 6 insurrectionists remain on trial, as candidates nationwide deny the results from 2020, as the president warns of a “path to chaos” – experts on voting and extremism want to make two things clear.</p> <p>First, voting in the United States remains extraordinarily safe.</p> <p>Second, as millions of Americans still seethe over the 2020 election and cast doubt on the fairness of the electoral process, spurred on by lies and disinformation, the possibility remains of tense confrontations or even violence at polling places this week.</p> <p>Election workers are stepping down in droves after being harassed and threatened, misinformation has ramped up, and volunteer groups are stepping in with de-escalation training to be used at polling places.</p> <p>Organizations pushing spurious claims of voter fraud now call for volunteers to patrol polling stations and election infrastructure in some states. That raises the likelihood of tense interactions between election critics and election officials and voters.</p> <p>Meanwhile, observers worry increased tensions could also come in the days and weeks post-election, especially in communities where election deniers are on the ballot or where election results are especially close or delayed.</p> <p>It’s a new normal for everyone – election officials, law enforcement officers and individual voters – who should be on alert, but not panicked, as they cast their votes, said Jared Holt, a senior researcher at the think tank the Institute for Strategic Dialogue and an expert on domestic extremism.</p> <p>“When it comes to risks at the polls, I keep telling people to be vigilant, but not paranoid,” Holt said. “Vigilance means being aware of some of the different things that you might see at polling locations and how to respond to those, whereas paranoia looks like believing armed goons are waiting outside your polling station now and maybe you just don’t want to go vote at all, because you’re worried about it.”</p> <p>The extremist threat</p> <p>Several experts on extremism told USA TODAY the same thing: Domestic extremist groups and organizations seeking to sow doubt in the electoral process thrive on spreading the message they’re going to show up in force on election day and confront and harass voters. But in reality that seldom actually happens, said Marcia Johnson-Blanco, co-director of the Voting Rights Project at the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law.</p> <p>“I am suspicious about a lot of these reports of plans to observe polling places, and to make sure the wrong voters aren’t voting,” Johnson-Blanco said. “All of that serves as a chilling effect — you don’t necessarily need to show, but just the fact that it’s being reported may keep voters away.”</p>

Johnson-Blanco said election-related harassment has historically been disproportionately focused on communities of color, particularly in neighborhoods where there is a high proportion of people who do not speak English as their first language.

In past years, extremist groups, particularly the armed anti-government organization the Oath Keepers, have been on the front line of election harassment. In 2018 and 2020, Oath Keepers pledged to patrol voting places in large numbers. But there were ultimately very few reports of harassment from Oath Keepers or other extremists.

In 2022, extremist groups have focused their hatred on other targets, particularly LGBTQ-friendly events like family-friendly drag shows, Holt said.

“A lot of Proud Boys chapters and other extremist movements are busy at the moment harassing gay people for existing,” Holt said. “We’re seeing way more calls for Proud Boys chapters to go protest drag events than we are seeing the Proud Boys trying to encourage their people to be poll workers or something like that.”

Spreading misinformation

Johnson-Blanco and other experts said this year they are most concerned groups that specialize in spreading misinformation about elections have been steadily ramping up their presence at the polls on election days.

Like extremist groups in years past, the organizations driving these misinformation campaigns say they are efforts to document voter fraud – even though such cases almost never really occur.

These groups are openly encouraging volunteers to “monitor” polling places, film the electoral process and even set up hidden cameras at locations where votes are dropped off.

Compounding the issue, several states have loosened their restrictions on what so-called “election observers” can and cannot do, legally, said Sophia Lin Lakin, interim co-director of the Voting Rights Project at the American Civil Liberties Union.

So while such monitors may not hassle voters in person, their false claims lead to more harassment of election officials, Lakin said.

“All of that is making the situation worse,” she said.

In some states, harassment from those quarters, often from people who falsely claim Joe Biden did not win the 2020 election, has already had a negative impact on the democratic process.

Ten of Nevada’s 17 counties have seen their top election official resign, retire or decline to seek re-election since the 2020 vote, which the state government calls a drastic exodus, according to Reuters.

Arizona has seen some of the most divisive debates over election security since the 2020 presidential election, and several candidates on the ballot have campaigned in part on the lies that the last election was corrupt.

In Maricopa County, Arizona, a federal judge on Nov. 1 ordered a group of self-appointed election monitors to dial back their presence at ballot drop-off locations, ordering them to stop wearing body armor or carry visible firearms within 250 feet of the box. The judge also banned them from yelling at or otherwise confronting people dropping off ballots, and ordered their leader to post a statement about the legality of ballot drops to her Trump-backed Truth Social network account.

Destroying the system from within

Looming over this year’s elections is the specter of the Jan. 6 insurrection. Inspired by lies and disinformation, the Capitol riot was, at its core, aimed at stopping the certification of the 2020 election. It

remains a stark example of electoral interference that experts worry inspires would-be wrongdoers as much as it troubles election workers.

That idea – that those who dislike an election’s outcome can use violence shut it down – has spread from the Capitol riot to the ballot, with dozens of election deniers running for office across the country.

What worries Olivia Troye, a former homeland security and counterterrorism adviser to Vice President Mike Pence, is that candidates who undermine the election process are learning that their conspiracy theories earn them votes.

She warned that even if voting is peaceful – and she worries it won't be – some candidates will put themselves in a position to destroy the system from within.

"Things have gotten worse because of this monitoring, this intimidation. The seed has been planted since 2020 and it's gotten worse," she said. "And the threats to election officials are getting worse."

Troye, a lifelong Republican, quit the White House in August 2020 over the administration's handling of the coronavirus pandemic. She endorsed Biden in the 2020 presidential election.

"We have an entire anti-democracy operation happening before our very eyes," Troye said. "There has been an ongoing effort focused on changing the rules of elections, and changing the referees who oversee elections, so that they can change the results and overrule the will of the people," she said. "All of this is correlated to the long term effect of the lies they've been told by the political leaders they embrace. We saw what it led to on Jan. 6th and that sentiment hasn't dissipated."

Law enforcement 'standing by'

In Arizona, despite the recent judge's order, Maricopa County Sheriff Paul Penzone said his deputies are prepared to intervene swiftly if they see any evidence of intimidation or violence.

"We're staffing and preparing for a worst-case scenario. We're not going to tolerate anything," Penzone told USA TODAY. "We want to make it abundantly clear that there's zero tolerance for anyone whose intentions are to interfere with, undermine or adversely affect the electoral process."

Penzone said he recognizes most observers are doing nothing more than exercising their Constitutional rights to gather or bear arms, and promised deputies would respect and protect those rights.

But Penzone, a Democrat who defeated the Trump-aligned Joe Arpaio in 2016, said he'd draw a hard line at anything intended to be intimidating.

"It's not partisan. It's not emotional. It's not subjective," he said.

The Department of Justice is working with U.S. Attorneys and specially trained FBI agents at 56 field offices to handle Election Day complaints about election fraud and voter intimidation, a standard practice.

Those DOJ teams will be stationed around the country while the polls are open. People who need to report voter intimidation should first call 911 for their local law enforcement agency, and then contact the Justice Department, officials said in a news release. And concerns about voting-related civil rights violations should be directed to the DOJ's Civil Rights Division.

In New York state, where Democrats have held the governor's mansion since 2006 but this year's race has become unexpectedly close, sheriffs statewide are prepared if needed. In addition to providing security at polling places, sheriffs in New York can be ordered to impound and secure ballots during disputes.

"We're standing by," said Peter Kehoe, executive director of the New York Sheriffs Association. "Hopefully all goes smoothly in New York. And if it doesn't, we'll be ready."

Election workers trained and prepared

Even in states where intimidation and violence hasn't yet been a major factor during this election cycle, the mood surrounding elections is much more tense than it was just a few years ago, election experts said.

State and local voting officials, mediation experts and peacekeepers are focusing on de-escalation training, increased security and rapid-response measures — strategies added in just the last few years out of a sense of preparation and precaution.

"Some of the long-time clerks tell me that 10 or 20 years ago, they were greeted on Election Day with pies and hugs. They tell me that it's a very different environment sometimes now," Maine Secretary of State Shenna Bellows told USA TODAY.

Rising political tensions parallel the increases in election misinformation and outright falsehoods, especially those that followed former President Donald Trump's false claims of a stolen 2020 presidential election and the violent insurrection at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021.

"I think the biggest trend that we are seeing is the epidemic of misinformation, disinformation and mal-information, when people believe lies about the 2020 election or think (it) was stolen," Bellows said. "That, as we saw at the events of Jan. 6th, can motivate some individuals to take violent action."

After two threats against local elections clerks in Maine — one online and one in-person — the state Legislature passed bipartisan legislation last year making threats against elections officials a crime to be investigated by the state attorney general. The legislature also instituted de-escalation training for local election clerks overseen by Bellows' office and security assessments for polling places and municipal offices conducted in concert with the national Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), Bellows said.

Election peacemakers

A group of faith leaders and social workers, operating as part of the religious political group Faith in Public Life, began responding to polling-place conflicts in 2021. The group, which uses de-escalation strategies to try to defuse potential clashes, began its election work in 2020 and is ready to respond in 2022, said the Rev. Dan Clark, Ohio director for Faith in Public Life.

"A lot of times, an election peacekeeper won't necessarily square up with the intimidator and try to solve whatever problem they're creating. Instead, an election peacekeeper often shows up in solidarity with the voters and brings that calming presence so that they can stay in line confidently and vote," he said.

Clark warns against overstating the severity of the problem. His group's peacekeepers responded to just five polling-place conflicts in the 22 Ohio counties that the group covered during the 2020 campaign — all on Election Day and the weekend preceding it.

It hasn't been called in yet this year during early voting.

But the mood at voting sites has changed in recent years, raising the prospects for potential intimidation and violence, said Clark. And ominously, in the aftermath of the Jan. 6 insurrection and other instances of political violence, this year's peacekeeper training included a new element, lessons in how to respond to an active-shooter situation, he said.

Conflict resolution and de-escalation skills traditionally focused on confrontation and violence in high-pressure situations like contested divorces and workplace rage are now being tailored to the increasingly stressful world of elections.

For four decades, the Mediation Center, a non-profit organization serving Savannah, Georgia, and the surrounding area, has offered mediation and conflict-resolution services to government agencies and other groups, often dealing with workplace and domestic conflicts that can become violent. Only this year did it

	<p>start getting deeply involved in training election workers, at the request of government workers, said Dan Rowe, the Mediation Center's senior manager of community programs.</p> <p>Training consists of lessons on situational awareness; finding ways to use language to avoid increasing agitation; and planning ahead for different conflict situations to avoid making mistakes under the pressure of a threatening situation, Rowe said.</p> <p>Even if not all the training and security is needed now, it can help de-escalation experts and election workers get ready for the future.</p> <p>"2022 isn't the last election that ever gets held," Rowe said. "We've got races coming up in 2023. We've got the big one in 2024. I don't want to say prepare for the worst, because that sounds very pessimistic. But be prepared is the goal."</p> <p>Rowe doesn't expect polling-place peace to be achieved by 2024, either. "I haven't heard any indicators that the temperature is going down," he said.</p>
	Return to Top

HEADLINE	11/07 Ethnic insurgents pressure Myanmar junta
SOURCE	https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2022-11-07/myanmar-arakan-army
GIST	<p>CHIANG MAI, Thailand — The day her 4-year-old grandson was killed, U San Yee had taken him to their local market in rural Myanmar for sticky rice and his favorite fried banana snacks before coming home to play with his toy cars.</p> <p>"We didn't know that the Myanmar military would fire artillery shells," U San Yee said. "That's why we were just going about and living our normal lives."</p> <p>When the first explosions struck Kin Seik, a farming village of about 3,000 people, the two were watching "Tom and Jerry" cartoons.</p> <p>"We tried to run to another place, but on the way a shell fell on my grandson and his mother while they were holding hands," said U San Yee, who could only watch as the boy bled to death and his mother was wounded.</p> <p>Three civilians were killed and eight others injured in the Aug. 28 attack on the community of bamboo houses on the fertile plains of the country's western Rakhine state. It was one of a series of deadly assaults that marked the collapse of an 18-month cease-fire between the military and the Arakan Army, one of the country's most powerful ethnic insurgent groups.</p> <p>Nearly 22 months after the country's military overthrew a democratically elected civilian government led by Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, it is now fighting a war on multiple fronts.</p> <p>More than 7,000 civilians have been killed since the coup, according to the Institute for Strategy and Policy, a Yangon-based think tank. Victims include protesters shot in the head, dissidents killed in detention and villagers bound and burned alive.</p> <p>But as the renewed fighting in Rakhine reflects, the military, which has ruled Myanmar with an iron grip for much of the last half century, remains unable to re-consolidate power.</p> <p>In one of the latest examples of violence, military jets bombed a concert in northern Kachin state on Oct. 23, killing at least 80 people, including civilians and members of the ethnic Kachin Independence Army.</p> <p>Meanwhile, dozens of junta soldiers have reportedly been killed since late October in Rakhine, northwestern Karen state and the central city of Mandalay.</p>

The junta has increasingly resorted to air power because of growing losses to infantry on the ground from ambushes and roadside bombs.

“The military is getting desperate,” said Kyaw Zaw, a spokesman for the National Unity Government, a parallel government filled with deposed civilian lawmakers working to dislodge the junta. “Their only strategy is to terrorize the population by targeting defenseless civilians.”

The junta is now confronting [newly formed rebel groups](#) such as the disparate People’s Defense Force aligned with the parallel government, and an increasing number of ethnic armed groups based in the country’s border regions.

Western sanctions and diplomatic pressure have done little to stanch the bloodshed — a civil war raging in the heart of Asia on the doorstep of two geopolitical giants, India and China.

Immediately following the coup, the new junta was confronted by mass protests that were brutally quashed with a series of urban massacres, propelling many of Myanmar’s youth to seek training and weapons from the country’s myriad ethnic armed groups. In September 2021, the parallel government declared a “people’s defensive war” to overthrow the military, forging formal alliances with some of the ethnic rebels.

Initially given little chance of resisting a military equipped with warplanes and heavy artillery, the insurgents have inflicted enough damage to keep the junta hopping. As a result, it is showing signs of stress. Casualties are rising and combat-ready replacements are scarce. Defections and poor pay are reportedly contributing to sinking morale.

If more ethnic armed groups like the Arakan Army join the fight against the military, known as the Tatmadaw, experts say it could eventually tip the scales in the civil war.

“The junta expected to readily subsume the country into its control with its brutal coercive power, but it has failed so far,” said Ye Myo Hein, a political scientist at the Wilson Center. “It has lost its consolidated control over a vast swath of territory across the country.”

“It’s hard to predict what will happen next,” he added, “but one thing is certain: the junta is losing ground.”

Myanmar, also known as Burma, has long been fractured along ethnic lines and dominated by the majority Buddhist Barmars who reside in the largest cities. The Southeast Asian nation roughly the size of Texas is home to more than 100 different ethnic groups, some of whom were fighting for autonomy even before Myanmar won independence from Britain in 1948.

One of those groups is the Rakhine, also known as the Arakanese. Despite being overwhelmingly Buddhist and speaking a language closely related to the Burmese used by Barmars, the Rakhine have long maintained a fierce separatist streak. Rakhine existed as an independent kingdom until it was conquered by the Burmese in 1785 and is isolated from the rest of the country by a rugged mountain range.

“We want our Rakhine state to be independent — it is the dream of every Rakhine person,” said a 32-year-old farmer in Maungdaw township, which has also seen heavy fighting in recent months, who asked to remain anonymous for safety reasons.

That staunch Rakhine-Buddhist identity contributed to one of the worst chapters in modern Burmese history when many Rakhine supported the Tatmadaw’s so-called “clearance operations” in 2017, forcing more than 750,000 Rohingya Muslims in Rakhine across the border into Bangladesh.

The United Nations said the crackdown was “a textbook example of ethnic cleansing.” Suu Kyi, who was under house arrest by the military for 15 years before winning landslide election victories in 2015 and 2020, refused to condemn the attacks and defended the military at the International Court of Justice in

2019, leading to her disgrace as a human rights figure. Since the junta took back control in early 2021, she has been imprisoned in the nation's capital.

It was in the wake of the junta's campaign against the Rohingya that fighting between the Arakan Army and the military worsened. Formed in 2009, the self-proclaimed 30,000-member force seeks self-determination for the Arakanese people and is represented by its political wing, the United League of Arakan. The group's foot soldiers have fought a guerrilla war against government security forces, ambushing military outposts and police stations.

Weary of the attacks, the government agreed to a cease-fire in November 2020. Analysts speculate the agreement was struck so that the military could prepare for the coup. The Arakan Army used the lull in fighting to consolidate more territory.

The truce would prove fleeting. Heavy fighting returned to Rakhine in July of this year, when the Arakan Army ambushed a column of the paramilitary Border Guard Police. The strike was in response to the military's arrest of supporters and members of the Arakan Army's civilian administration. Clashes quickly spread across Rakhine, including in Maungdaw, near the Bangladesh border; Mrauk-U, the Arakan Kingdom's ancient capital; and Taungup, near a southern beach vacation destination. Paletwa, in neighboring Chin state, also saw fighting.

The Maungdaw farmer who spoke to The Times said there had been no fighting in his area for years. But since mid-August, he frequently goes to bed to the steady sound of shelling and fighter jets, wondering if his village will be bombed.

Kyaw Lynn, an ethnic Rakhine political analyst, said the fighting in Maungdaw underscores the Arakan Army's desire to seize control of the border with Bangladesh, which is important both for economic reasons and issues of sovereignty.

To burnish its legitimacy, the Arakan Army has tried to forge a better relationship with Bangladesh by presenting itself as a more reliable partner than the junta in handling the Rohingya refugee crisis. More than 900,000 Rohingya are living in squalid camps in Bangladesh, putting a massive strain on the impoverished country. An effort to repatriate many of the refugees has repeatedly faltered under the military.

"The international community, including the Bangladeshi government, has to recognize the United League of Arakan as a key stakeholder in trying to resolve this" crisis, Khaing Thu Kha, a spokesman for the Arakan Army, said at a news conference in September.

Whether the Arakan Army can achieve autonomy may hinge on its burgeoning relationship with the National Unity Government. Formed after the coup by a group of lawmakers elected in the 2020 polls, it includes many former National League for Democracy officials. While some of its officials are based abroad, other leaders remain in Myanmar where they've begun rolling out public services in anti-military strongholds. Schools, police forces and healthcare clinics are up and running, typically manned by civil servants who went on strike in protest of the coup.

Unlike other armed groups, the Arakan Army has refused to pledge loyalty to the opposition forces because of tensions in the past with Suu Kyi and her party. In 2019, a National League for Democracy official referred to the Rakhine insurgents as "terrorists." The following year, the Arakan Army justified abducting three National League for Democracy parliamentary candidates by accusing the party of cooperating with the Tatmadaw.

Now presented with a common enemy, the relationship has thawed. The Arakan Army met with the National Unity Government in May, while rejecting an invitation for peace talks from the junta. At the meeting, Khaing Thu Kha said the Arakan Army would "open the door" to cooperation, but reiterated the demands for autonomy — something the National Unity Government is reluctant to grant for fear that other ethnic armed groups will make similar demands.

	<p>As long as the junta remains in power, the people of Rakhine will likely struggle to reconcile their desire for self-determination with support for a shadow government stacked with Suu Kyi's acolytes.</p> <p>"Yes, I want the NUG to overthrow the military. But personally, I want our people to control our state," the Maungdaw farmer said. "I want this to be the final war in Rakhine."</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	11/06 Russia suffers heavy losses east Ukraine
SOURCE	https://www.newsmax.com/globaltalk/ukraine-russia-war/2022/11/06/id/1095126/
GIST	<p>Russian forces are suffering heavy losses in Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Sunday, Reuters reported.</p> <p>The Russian army has increasingly been attacking Ukrainian civilian infrastructure, with Zelenskyy warning that Moscow may be concentrating its forces for renewed assaults on the nation's energy infrastructure ahead of winter.</p> <p>Experts say that the war appears to be heading towards a period of stalemate, with the approach of harsh winter conditions.</p> <p>U.S. National Security adviser Jake Sullivan said in Kyiv last week that American backing for Ukraine would remain "unwavering and unflinching," as he placed full blame for the conflict on Russian President Vladimir Putin, according to Reuters.</p> <p>"This war could end very easily. Russia chose to start it, Russia could choose to end it by ceasing its attack on Ukraine, ceasing its occupation of Ukraine and that's precisely what it should do, from our perspective," Sullivan said.</p> <p>His statements come amid reports that the U.S. is privately encouraging Kyiv to express an openness to hold talks with Moscow as a calculated maneuver in order to maintain the support of other nations in the intentional community who are most affected by the war's effect on the cost of food and fuel and thus are more eager for the conflict to end.</p> <p>Meanwhile, the United States announced \$400 million worth of additional security assistance for Ukraine that brought the total amount of American military aid sent there to more than \$18.2 billion since the Russian invasion in February.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	11/06 Wildlife conference Spokane receives flak
SOURCE	https://www.spokesman.com/stories/2022/nov/06/controversy-over-huntings-role-in-conservation-pro/
GIST	<p>A well-respected wildlife conference is getting flak from some in the hunting community following inclusion of two advocacy groups focused on reforming state wildlife management.</p> <p>"All are welcome," Ed Arnett the CEO of the Wildlife Society said in a voicemail shared with The Spokesman-Review.</p> <p>Conference organizers notified law enforcement and conference security while simultaneously reminding attendees to adhere to the organization's guidelines for professional behavior. Due to the size of the annual conference it's "standard procedure" to do so. There was no evidence of a specific threat, he said in an email.</p> <p>He said the Wildlife Society has been in contact with the Spokane Police Department and security for the convention center to make sure that "everybody is safe at our conference."</p> <p>"I'm not expecting any shenanigans, but I believe we're prepared for it," he said.</p>

Most of the weeklong conference schedule reads like a syllabus for a master's level course in ecology. For example: "Harnessing data ranging from landscapes to individuals to advance conservation and wildlife ecology," or "Biometrics and Population Monitoring III."

Two events, however, have drawn the ire of hunting advocacy groups. On Monday night, Washington Wildlife First – [an organization dedicated to reforming the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife](#) – will host a meet-and-greet and show an animated film based on a poem written by the late Spokane-based wolf advocate Hanke Seipp.

Then on Thursday, Wildlife For All – [a national organization also dedicated to reforming state wildlife management](#) – is hosting a panel discussion titled "Transforming State Wildlife Management to Be More Ecologically Focused, Democratic, and Compassionate."

"This session will explore the proposition that the current system of state wildlife management in the U.S. is out of alignment with modern ecological understanding, public attitudes, public trust principles and norms of democratic governance, and that systemic problems hinder states from meeting the challenge of protecting wildlife today," states the panel description.

The controversy started when Sportsmen's Alliance wrote an article in late October titled "Animal Extremists Allowed Seat at Scientific Conference." The national organization focused on protecting hunting and fishing access criticized the inclusion of the two groups.

Both groups advocate for state wildlife agencies to focus more on species and habitat conservation and less on hunting and fishing opportunity. [They broadly argue](#) that climate change and biodiversity loss means the [North American Model of Wildlife Management](#) – which is largely credited for pulling numerous species from the brink of extinction in the 1900s and relies on hunting and fishing license sales to fund conservation work – is outdated. Neither organization says it is anti-hunting, [although some in the hunting community disagree](#).

"The Wildlife Society, the organization responsible for ensuring science is used in wildlife management, is allowing an organization intent on destroying a century of scientific management to air their anti-hunting beliefs at the national conference to a roomful of biologists," [the Sportsmen's Alliance article states](#). "I say belief system because Wildlife For All has no science to back up their positions or beliefs. Rather, they have theories ... theories that contradict not just the North American model of Wildlife Management, but the ... position statements of The Wildlife Society itself."

The Wildlife Society, which has about 12,000 active members, is dedicated to sustaining "wildlife populations and habitats through science-based management and conservation." In 2020, the society published a position paper on the animal rights philosophy calling it ["incompatible with science-based conservation and management of wildlife"](#). The society is generally well respected by hunters and anglers.

"Make no mistake, the Wildlife Society has very strong policies that strongly support hunting and trapping," said Gordon Batcheller, a retired New York state biologist and the president of the Wildlife Society.

"This conference, for us, is all about professional growth and inclusiveness and the willingness to hear view points we may not agree with."

Samantha Bruegger, the executive director of Washington Wildlife First, said the Sportsmen Alliance article alongside a string of other articles critical of her group caused the Wildlife Society to alert security at the Convention Center and the Spokane Police Department. The Wildlife Society also posted its guidelines for professional behavior prominently atop its webpage and emailed them to attendees.

Bruegger shared a voicemail from the CEO of the Wildlife Society with The Spokesman-Review Friday. Spokane police spokeswoman Julie Humphreys said it's "pretty normal for us if we get large gatherings to be notified" although she did not know specifics about The Wildlife Society conference, Saturday.

Bruegger called the Sportsmen Alliance article "dangerous rhetoric" and urged inclusivity.

"I think we're all stronger when we're civil and able to have these kind of tough discussions in a safe way," she said.

Dan Wilson, the Washington co-chair for Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, believes organizations like Washington Wildlife First are focused more on social issues and less on science.

"It could be problematic that an organization that demotes science-based management to a secondary role in wildlife would be at a scientific conference," he said, adding that the inclusion of those two groups "seems to undermine their values."

In particular, [he pointed to the decision to end spring bear hunting in Washington](#) — a move that was championed by Washington Wildlife First, despite the fact that state biologist recommended the hunt continue and said it was ecologically defensible.

"That is really adopting a lot of social or cultural positions into a scientific management model," he said. That being said, Wilson noted that the conference can invite whomever they like and that he still "has a lot of respect" for the Wildlife Society.

Washington Department of Fish Wildlife Commissioner Kim Thorburn, of Eastern Washington, [is a frequent and vocal critic of the views espoused](#) by both Washington Wildlife First and Wildlife for All calling them "animal rights ideologues." She wrote to Wildlife Society organizers airing her concerns. She said organizers were unaware of the Washington group's efforts to undermine state management prior to selling them booth space.

Still, Thorburn defended the groups' presence.

"My position is that they shouldn't be prohibited from being there, especially since I've learned that the society does not currently have procedures about vetting conference applicants with political positions that are harmful to wildlife conservation and management," she said in an email. "I do hope, and this was the ask in my letter, that the society makes it very clear that, as the national professional association of wildlife biologists and managers, these folks represent an ideology that is antithetical to their profession."

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/06 Army conducts live-fire HIMARS training
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/northwest/u-s-army-conducts-live-fire-himars-training-at-yakima-training-center/
GIST	<p>YAKIMA TRAINING CENTER — By the time the three soldiers stepped out of the HIMARS — High Mobility Artillery Rocket System — they operate, they had been at work for more than 24 hours straight.</p> <p>After waking in the middle of the night the day before at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, they had flown with the HIMARS — essentially a rocket or missile launcher mounted on a 5-ton truck — and deployed at the Yakima Training Center to test their vehicle and themselves.</p> <p>"It's been tiring," Sgt. Anthony Phalon said. "But you get used to it, especially if you've done it for a long time."</p> <p>They spent hours cooped up in the truck's cab, conducting maneuvers with their unit — the 1st Battalion, 94th Field Artillery Regiment — simulating combat against an opponent with similar weapons capabilities.</p>

“What makes (1st Battalion, 94th Field Artillery Regiment) more unique is the rigorous training that we do,” said the battery commander, Capt. Trevor Breitenbach. “They’re put through the worst possible situation we could give them.”

Despite the long hours, the crew’s spirits were high. A few minutes later, they conducted a live fire test, sending rockets soaring. The test was the result of months of work and preparation from the battalion.

“Our soldiers have worked tirelessly over the last 11 months to really prepare for what is this culminating event out here at the YTC,” said Lt. Col. Grady Lowe, the battalion’s commander. “They face a wide, opposing force that replicates the threats that an adversary would have in a real-world conflict. It culminates in them conducting a live fire at the platoon and battery level.”

The HIMARS has been used in real-world conflicts. The United States has been supplying the weapon to Ukraine, where it has been used to attack Russian supply lines and logistics centers. Lowe said that it also was used in conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria.

The HIMARS is one of the U.S. military’s premier weapons systems, Lowe added, because of its maneuverability and range. It can reach about 60 miles with rockets or almost 190 miles with missiles and can launch and change locations in roughly five minutes, Breitenbach said.

That range is one of the reasons that the HIMARS is tested at YTC. At Joint Base Lewis-McChord, there simply is not enough room to conduct live-fire trainings. At YTC, the U.S. Army can safely use test rockets with a reduced range.

Rockets cost about \$100,000 per launch, according to Al-Jazeera. Trainings at YTC used test rockets, though. While the U.S. government has promised more HIMARS for Ukraine, the units tested at YTC were for U.S. military use.

The 1st Battalion, 94th Field Artillery Regiment, is regularly deployed on training exercises with countries in the Indo-Pacific region — like Indonesia or the Philippines — and is ready to be deployed throughout the Pacific, if necessary.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/04 Constitutional sheriffs movement in WA
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/politics/right-wing-sheriff-candidates-who-believe-their-power-exceeds-the-feds-are-on-the-ballot-in-wa/
GIST	<p>Four years ago, many of Washington state’s sheriffs were unhappy with a voter-approved gun-safety law that required stronger background checks and raised the age to buy a semi-automatic rifle.</p> <p>Thirteen sheriffs, however, went a step beyond merely expressing their displeasure. They announced they would defy the new gun laws because, in their interpretation, it violated the U.S. Constitution.</p> <p>“I will follow the rule of law,” Klickitat County Sheriff Bob Songer said at the time, “when I believe it’s constitutional.”</p> <p>For Songer, it was a tipping point. Not only did it get him on far-right conspiracist Alex Jones’ show, but his stance caught the attention of the Constitutional Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association, a far-right, anti-government group that wrongly asserts a sheriff’s power supersedes that of state and federal authority. In 2019, they awarded Songer the Washington State Constitutional Sheriff of the Year Award.</p> <p>Since then, the so-called “constitutional sheriff” movement has grown in Washington. Songer, along with Snohomish County Sheriff Adam Fortney and others, refused to enforce state COVID-19 mandates. And with the Nov. 8, 2022, election just around the corner, candidates for sheriff in Washington are increasingly touting their “constitutional sheriff” credentials, with many believing that they have the ultimate authority to decide what is constitutional and to enforce the law accordingly.</p>

While only about 300 out of more than 3,000 sheriffs in the country are official members of the Constitutional Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association, nearly half of sheriffs nationwide who responded to a survey [by The Marshall Project](#) said they believe their power outranks federal or state government in their county.

Other sheriffs or candidates for the office may not believe their authority is that powerful but are still willing to disregard a law based on its perceived constitutionality.

Sheriffs have some discretion when enforcing laws, but they do not have the power to decide what is constitutional like the judicial branch. That many sheriffs believe they have that power concerns people like Rupa Bhattacharyya, special litigation counsel for the Institute for Constitutional Advocacy and Protection within Georgetown University Law Center.

It's not just worrisome because they may decide not to enforce laws they disagree with. Bhattacharyya said the worst case scenario would be if these sheriffs are emboldened to meddle with the elections process. Already, 2020 election deniers are recruiting county sheriffs to more closely watch over future elections.

"These few, vocal sheriffs who have gone a little bit rogue are very concerning," she said. "Because there's not a great way to hold them accountable, other than by not electing them."

"The greatest threat"

The Constitutional Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association was founded in 2011 by Richard Mack, a former sheriff in Arizona who believes "the greatest threat we face, as a nation, is our own federal government." The organization was [opposed to the Obama administration's](#) gun initiatives and promised its members wouldn't enforce policies they thought violated the Constitution.

More recently, Mack and the association have been focused on resisting COVID-19 mandates and encouraging sheriffs to investigate unfounded [conspiracies about the 2020 election](#). The Anti-Defamation League considers the organization an "anti-government extremist group."

Songer has been a prominent voice for Mack's group after Mack celebrated his stance on Washington's gun laws. In May, the group [listed Songer as a](#) "sheriff committed to investigating election fraud" and quoted Songer saying he was convinced there was widespread voter fraud in the 2020 election after seeing the [widely debunked](#) film "2000 Mules."

In a recent webinar with Mack, Songer said that the association awarding him the "Constitutional Sheriff of the Year" was an "eye-opener" regarding his duties as sheriff.

"I said, 'You know, if I'm going to be elected sheriff, my primary job is to interpose when government is the bad guy,' " Songer said. "And here in Washington state, we've got some bad guys in government."

When asked why he believes he has authority to enforce laws based on his own reading of the Constitution, Songer points to his oath of office to uphold the U.S. and state constitutions.

But while "constitutional sheriffs" often use this argument, it doesn't hold up to scrutiny, said Bhattacharyya, who has held leadership positions with the U.S. Department of Justice and the Department of the Treasury.

For one, the word "sheriff" doesn't appear in the U.S. Constitution. While sheriffs have discretion — they don't go after every person for jaywalking, for example — their oath of office does not give them the authority to pass laws like legislatures or to decide their constitutionality like the courts. The oath that sheriffs take is not unique.

“It’s virtually the same as the oath that every other government officer takes,” said Bhattacharyya. “They’ve sort of cobbled together this theory based on authorities that don’t really do what they’re claiming that they do.”

Other Washington sheriffs and candidates have similar beliefs even if they aren’t members of the Constitutional Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association like Songer. Out of 39 counties in Washington, 17 current sheriffs [endorsed Songer](#).

The “far-right” ideology promoted by Mack and Songer is expressed “by a disturbingly large number of sheriffs,” said Devin Burghart, executive director of the Institute for Research and Education on Human Rights, a Seattle-based nonprofit that’s studied the movement.

Protect and serve

InvestigateWest reached out to each sheriff candidate in Washington hoping to clarify how they view a sheriff’s authority. Of those who responded, several expressed their belief that their power was greater than federal or state authority, even if they sometimes found Mack extreme.

Franklin County sheriff candidate Chris Turner, for example, said he believes the elected sheriff has greater authority than the federal or state government. Joe Harris, running for sheriff in Grant County, said in an interview that if there were a state or federal law that he didn’t think was constitutional, then he would not enforce it.

A campaign manager for Clark County sheriff candidate Rey Reynolds responded to InvestigateWest’s questions with a letter to the editor Reynolds wrote to a local paper in which he said, “The sheriff is the ultimate law enforcement authority in a county.” The campaign did not respond to follow-up questions aiming to clarify whether he believes sheriff’s power supersedes state and federal officials.

In Chelan County, Sheriff Brian Burnett said “it’s kind of a fine line.” Burnett, who is also the president of the Washington State Sheriff’s Association, said he’s attended speeches by Mack but that Burnett didn’t agree with the “total philosophy.” Sheriffs, Burnett conceded, don’t make laws and aren’t interpreters of the law.

On the other hand, Burnett is one of the 17 sheriffs to endorse Songer this election cycle. And the actions he took in recent years are similar to Songer’s: Burnett said he wouldn’t be investigating crimes related to Washington’s new gun laws and he announced he wouldn’t enforce COVID-19 masking rules and other mandates.

“At some point if you end up with a corrupt government, if somebody is doing something that you believe is not constitutional, that’s where the sheriff has not just the right, but a duty to intervene and uphold those laws,” Burnett said in an interview.

Other sheriffs, however, took a strong stance against the idea that sheriffs have unilateral authority when reached by InvestigateWest. Burnett’s challenger in this year’s election, Mike Morrison, said he “wouldn’t allow personal feelings to dictate how I do law enforcement.”

He referred to Mack and the “constitutional sheriffs” group as “more of an extremist political group” and said he would consult with prosecutors and the county attorney if he had questions over the legality of enforcing a law.

“My No. 1 goal is to protect and serve and enforce the laws of the state,” Morrison said.

Kitsap County Sheriff John Gese also rejected Mack’s ideology. His opponent, Rick Kuss, is [part of the “constitutional sheriffs” movement](#) and was endorsed by Joe Arpaio, the controversial former sheriff in Arizona [pardoned](#) by President Donald Trump.

“People ask me all the time, ‘Do you believe in enforcing the Constitution?’ Yes, absolutely. That’s part of my oath,” Gese said. “I don’t think the Constitution gives sheriffs a greater degree of authority over state or federal officials.”

What can states do?

The power of sheriffs does not outrank the feds or the state, but in practice, there’s often little to be done about a sheriff who refuses to enforce laws.

When the group of Washington sheriffs defied the state gun laws in 2019, Gov. Jay Inslee accused them of “grandstanding.” But Inslee didn’t do anything else besides [tell the Washington State Patrol](#) to enforce the law in those counties.

Washington Attorney General Bob Ferguson, meanwhile, wrote a letter that said a county could be held liable if a sheriff, for example, failed to perform a background check for a gun that landed in the hands of a dangerous individual. The AG’s office did not return a message seeking comment for this article.

In Washington, a sheriff can be removed through a recall process just like any other elected politician, but recall efforts are typically unsuccessful. In Snohomish County, efforts to recall Sheriff Fortney over his refusal to enforce pandemic restrictions [failed](#).

“There are not a lot of formal consequences, because they’re elected,” Bhattacharyya said.

King County recently made the sheriff an appointed position instead of an elected one. Sheriffs across the state are predictably opposed to such a move, but even those most concerned with rogue “constitutional sheriffs” don’t love that idea.

“I don’t think that’s the right tool,” Burghart said.

Instead, he’d rather educate the public about what he calls the “far-right agenda” and hope voters make the right decision.

Bhattacharyya, too, has mixed feelings about appointed sheriffs. Elections are the best way to hold people accountable, she said.

“I think it’s a decision that communities have to make on their own,” she said.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/06 Storm brings rain, wind and flood warnings
SOURCE	https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/storm-brings-rain-wind-flood-warnings-snow-western-washington/2YB5EXGKZBC4RGM6YIHB3B662Q/
GIST	<p>Heavy rain and high winds arrived in Western Washington on Friday, leaving several areas to deal with power outages, flooding, and slick roads. Follow live updates on conditions throughout the day below.</p> <p><i>Outage maps:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Seattle City Light• Puget Sound Energy• Snohomish PUD• Tacoma Public Utilities <p>Live updates:</p> <p>11 p.m.: Seattle City Light is reporting 89 customers without power, mainly in the Capitol Hill neighborhood. Puget Sound Energy has 12,330 customers without power in areas scattered across the Puget Sound region. Snohomish PUD is reporting 39,100 customers without power. There are no current outages in Tacoma Public Utilities’ service area.</p>

9:20 p.m.: Seattle City Light is reporting 90 customers without power, mainly in the Capitol Hill neighborhood. Puget Sound Energy has 14,399 customers without power in areas scattered across the Puget Sound region. Snohomish PUD is reporting 43,348 customers without power. There are no current outages in Tacoma Public Utilities' service area.

7:40 p.m.: Seattle City Light is reporting 90 customers without power. Puget Sound Energy has 15,541 customers without power in areas scattered across the Puget Sound region. Snohomish PUD is reporting 48,446 customers without power. There are no current outages in Tacoma Public Utilities' service area.

6:10 p.m.: Seattle City Light is reporting 90 customers without power. Puget Sound Energy has 16,162 customers without power in areas scattered across the Puget Sound region. Snohomish PUD is reporting 50,341 customers without power. There are no current outages in Tacoma Public Utilities' service area.

4:30 p.m.: Seattle City Light is reporting 90 customers without power. Puget Sound Energy has 15,953 customers without power in areas scattered across the Puget Sound region. Snohomish PUD is reporting 53,827 customers without power. There are no current outages in Tacoma Public Utilities' service area.

3:30 p.m.: Seattle City Light is reporting 464 customers without power, with the largest concentration of outages near Lake Forest Park and Seattle's Sand Point neighborhood. Puget Sound Energy has 17,636 customers without power in areas scattered across the Puget Sound region. Snohomish PUD is reporting 59,344 customers without power. There are no current outages in Tacoma Public Utilities' service area.

2 p.m.: Seattle City Light is reporting 467 customers without power, with the largest concentration of outages near Lake Forest Park and Seattle's Sand Point neighborhood. Puget Sound Energy has 18,556 customers without power in areas scattered across the Puget Sound region. Snohomish PUD is reporting 59,304 customers without power. There are no current outages in Tacoma Public Utilities' service area.

More wind and flood alerts are available on our [weather alerts page](#).

Flood warning canceled for Snoqualmie River

Just after noon Friday, the Snoqualmie River reached flood Phase 3 with moderate flooding expected in low lying areas around Snoqualmie Valley. It was upgraded to Phase 4 around 8:30 p.m Friday before being downgraded to a phase 3 warning early Saturday. On Sunday night, the flood warning for the Snoqualmie River was extended to last until Sunday morning, but it was later canceled early Sunday.

"We're pulling everything that's ready to be harvested out of the fields, that we can," David Haakenson, the owner of Jubilee Farm in Carnation, said on Friday. "I can't really sleep the nights that it's flooding. I just can't, just knowing that the water's coming up. So I usually walk around at night and just make sure I didn't forget anything. ... I know my farm is still there under the water, but I make my living on the fields. And to watch that disappear from view activates some sort of lizard part of my brain that says, it's gone."

Haakenson spent Friday moving equipment and livestock to higher ground. He said Jubilee Farm has seen an unusually high number of floods in the past year.

"Flood season started at the end of October last year. It was almost like back-to-back-to-back floods, in a way that was unusual. Like, not really that many floods ever before," Haakenson said.

Several hours after speaking with Haakenson, the road that his farm is located on was shut down.

King County closed West Snoqualmie River Road Northeast on Friday at 4:30 p.m. due to water over the roadway.

Carnation City Manager Ana Cortez said the city prepared for potential flooding by ensuring its stormwater systems were ready. The city is also asking residents to clear drains and gutters of debris, according to Cortez.

High winds create problems in the North Sound

High winds in the North Sound could cause problems in places like Everett and Mukilteo. Utility companies are warning people to be prepared for possible power outages as the storm continues to roll through Western Washington.

“Oh no, I like the 90 degrees better,” Sophie Friedman, a Snohomish County resident, said. While Friedman prefers warmer weather, Bruce Lystad is welcoming the cold change.

“You live in Washington, you gotta go outside no matter what. You can’t be afraid of a little rain,” Lystad said. His son, Desmond, agreed.

“I love the rain!” Desmond exclaimed. “I can splash puddles like this and I love to swim.”

Many folks were in Mukilteo to experience the wind and are hoping to see big waves crashing over the parking lot.

“I was at work today and I was like, oh I want to go down and see if we can see some big waves,” Jack Kuchera said. Several people parked their cars, hoping for large waves.

While many people hoped to see waves crashing over the parking lot, Michael Snyder, who runs Pacific Northwest Weather Watch, said that’s not likely to happen in Mukilteo on Friday.

“Probably not this time just because of the timing of the tides, if it was six hours difference it would be a different story,” Snyder said.

At Point Ruston, those who ventured out told KIRO 7 they actually enjoyed the windy, wet conditions.

“I think this my favorite part of Washington,” said Point Ruston visitor Corey Elliot. “I don’t like the hot, dry part, so it’s always nice to have rain.”

Wind gusts at Point Ruston reached upwards of 35 mph throughout the day Friday.

Forecast:

A **winter storm warning** is in effect for the following areas until 10 a.m. Monday: Okanogan Highlands-Okanogan Valley-Waterville Plateau-Western Okanogan County-Including the cities of Republic, Wauconda, Bridgeport, Mansfield, Okanogan, Boulder Creek Road, Oroville, Twisp, Omak, Conconully, Disautel Pass, Brewster, Methow, Mazama, Badger Mountain Road, Loup Loup Pass, Sherman Pass, Chesaw Road, Nespelem, Waterville, Inchelium, Winthrop, and Highway 20 Wauconda Summit.

Heavy snow is expected in these areas. Strong winds and snow on tree limbs could also down power lines and prompt outages.

A **winter weather advisory** is in effect for the following areas until 4 p.m. Sunday: Cascade mountains and valleys of Snohomish and King Counties, including Darrington, Index, Skykomish, Stevens Pass, and Snoqualmie Pass and Cascade mountains and valleys of Pierce and Lewis Counties, including the Crystal Mountain Ski Area, Paradise on Mount Rainier, Ashford, Randle, and Packwood.

Snow is expected in these areas, above 2000 feet, with additional snow accumulations of 2 to 16 inches.

SUNDAY: Another disturbance moves through with some lowland rain and more mountain snow. With snow falling throughout the Cascade passes, a Winter Weather Advisory remains active through Sunday

	<p>afternoon. Given the conditions and it being the weekend, it is worth noting that travel will likely be difficult during this time. Heading into the rest of the night, the active weather becomes more widespread as the next front begins moving in.</p> <p>MONDAY: Probably our best chance for some light lowland snow comes Monday morning before temperatures warm. Again, significant accumulations aren't expected and any snow that does fall will melt. Best chances will be in the north Sound. By afternoon, it's a mix of showers and sunbreaks with highs in the low 40s. Slick and slushy roads Monday morning are a concern for now.</p> <p>TUESDAY - WEDNESDAY: A drier weather pattern settles in with morning lows in the 20s to near 30 and highs in the 30s to near 40. Some sunshine but the coldest days of the season so far, as temperatures continue to drop with overnight lows hovering just barely above freezing.</p> <p>LATER IN THE WEEK: Some showers are possible starting about Thursday but more on that as we get closer.</p>
	Return to Top

HEADLINE	11/05 WSP concern: more collisions as DST ends
SOURCE	https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/daylight-saving-time-ends-troopers-concerned-about-more-collisions-dark-roads/4HLTZRQV7VG57GYQQB76LAA3MI/
GIST	<p>As if the last few days haven't been gloomy enough, now comes the dreaded "fall back" as daylight saving time comes to an end at 2 a.m. Sunday.</p> <p>As always, you'll be getting an extra hour of sleep overnight — but the tradeoff is that sunsets will now happen as early as 4 p.m.</p> <p>In 2019, state lawmakers voted to do away with the yearly practice, and Gov. Jay Inslee signed the legislation. Despite those efforts, Washington still needs congressional approval to adopt daylight saving measures.</p> <p>So far, no deal has been reached.</p> <p>Ahead of the darker times, state troopers say they have no doubt that there will be an increase in accidents on our roadways.</p> <p>"In essence, they're going to be traveling in rush hour in dusk or dark or dawn, so it's not going to be daylight like this, and we're going to get rain, possibly snow," said Washington State Patrol Trooper Rick Johnson. "The concern is just more collisions."</p> <p>Washington is in good company in its efforts to do away with falling back. Currently, 19 other states have legislation that would end the process of the time change.</p>
	Return to Top

HEADLINE	11/07 Challenges but Europeans stick w/Ukraine
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/07/world/europe/europe-ukraine-war-support.html
GIST	<p>ROME — The high cost of living is provoking strikes, protests and widespread grumbling. Talk about nuclear weapons has heightened anxieties and encouraged some to demand rapid negotiations. And President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia is wooing politicians, including many from populist parties on the right and the left who have flirted with him in the past.</p> <p>But while Mr. Putin may have bet on European fatigue and intolerance for hardship to divide the alliance and buckle its weakest members, more than eight months into Russia's war on Ukraine, the scale of the challenges has been leveraged effectively by leaders to stiffen the public spine and Europe is holding firm.</p>

Despite some kicking and screaming, governments across the ideological spectrum and the continent — in Western and Eastern Europe, in the Baltics and along the Mediterranean — are maintaining support for Ukraine and tough sanctions on Russia.

While recent polls show a slight dip in popular support for Ukraine across Europe, backing still remains strong, and the leaders of Germany, France and Italy — the continent's three largest countries — seem insulated against external and internal pressures to cave for the foreseeable future, as they have all recently had elections.

Many analysts believe that commitment will last [as long as the United States holds the line](#), but gains in Tuesday's midterm elections by Republicans, some of whom have questioned the cost of the war, could alter those expectations. Most of those pushing for immediate peace or a re-embrace of Mr. Putin are for now sequestered in the political opposition.

"Of course we want to achieve peace, that's the goal for everybody, but it's impossible to achieve this goal, peace, without justice," Antonio Tajani, Italy's new foreign minister, said in a brief interview in his office on Wednesday.

"If you want peace," he added, "you need to strengthen Ukraine."

How long such resolve will last remains the lingering question, especially with the uneasy realization that the war will stretch through winter, and most likely beyond, pushing Europeans into a new world of security threats and economic uncertainty.

But many Europeans are girding themselves for the challenge.

"Putin is a dictator. He's attacking all of the European Union. I find it intolerable," said Tristan Malinas, 28, a roofing apprentice, who sat watching his 3-year-old daughter ride an antique carousel during a midweek holiday in Paris. "The European Union was created for peace. He is trying to destroy that."

Like him, many French have accepted President Emmanuel Macron's depiction of the war as an existential battle, directly threatening peace and democracies built carefully since World War II and reinforced by the creation of NATO and the European Union. Many also worry that Russia's targets will expand, bringing the war closer to their own doorsteps.

"In France, there's a strong concern if we don't stop Putin here, he will continue — next will be Poland or the Baltic nations. He will eventually destabilize all of Europe," said Jérôme Fourquet, one of France's leading pollsters, whose firm, IFOP, has shown support for sanctions against Russia and for Ukraine in general still around 70 percent.

Few French believe the Russian argument that the war was pushed by NATO and the United States, he added. "For the great majority of French people, there is no debate," he said. "It's clear that Ukraine is the victim and Russia the attacker."

Though France has seen widespread strikes in recent weeks over the rising cost of living exacerbated by the war, many French seem prepared to pay the price of their resolve. It has helped that the government, like Germany's, has spent massively to blunt some of the effects of inflation and higher energy prices.

An unseasonably warm autumn, with record-breaking temperatures in October, has helped buy time, too — as has the gas that Europe saved over the summer, driving down the prices and allowing Europe's reserves to be historically full for this winter.

A new survey by eupinions, a platform for European public opinion by the polling foundation Bertelsmann Stiftung, found that 57 percent of Europeans, [down from 60 percent](#) in the summer and 64 percent in March, still support sending arms to Ukraine.

“The French simply don’t have the right to say that they are fed up with the war,” said Florence Habay, 50, playing with her two sons in Paris’s Bastille district.

The rise in gas prices has spelled the end of the family’s weekend trips to a country home. But it seemed a small price to pay compared with what is happening on the Ukrainian battlefields, she said.

But there are still signs that European resolve could yet soften under the weight of the economic toll and fears of a wider war or the use of nuclear weapons.

Calls for peace have been a prominent feature of protests organized by the far right over high energy prices and inflation in Germany, where 60 percent of the population believes there is a need for more diplomatic initiatives.

Even the moderate leader of the eastern state of Saxony, Michael Kretschmer, from the former Chancellor Angela Merkel’s Christian Democratic Union party, has pushed for negotiations and reconciliation.

Some elements in the Social Democratic Party of Chancellor Olaf Scholz are also showing signs of gravitating back toward rapprochement with Russia.

Rolf Mützenich, the head of the party’s parliamentary group, accused the foreign minister of not doing more to find a diplomatic solution, and argued that there needed to be a “balance” between the Ukrainian right to self-defense and the need for diplomacy.

That feeling is simmering around Europe, though for now, it is relegated to the opposition.

“There are two camps now in Europe,” George Katrougalos, the former Greek foreign minister of the country’s main opposition Syriza party, said in a recent interview. “The camp of justice and the camp of peace.”

“The camp of justice says, now, whatever, Russia must be punished and we cannot have an end of the war, at least until Russia is defeated completely,” he added. “I don’t believe this is feasible for a nuclear power. So I’m supporting the other idea. The idea of peace.”

But Greece’s government has been staunchly in support of Ukraine, as has Italy’s new prime minister, Giorgia Meloni. In an interview before taking power last month, she said she would “totally” continue to send offensive arms to Ukraine.

But Ms. Meloni’s coalition partner, Silvio Berlusconi, was quoted this past week saying a peace process depended on Ukraine understanding that at a certain point, “it can no longer count on arms and help.”

Mr. Tajani, a member of Mr. Berlusconi’s party, said that what mattered was not what Mr. Berlusconi said in private, but how he voted in public, and that he had consistently backed Ukraine.

“This for a politician is important, what we do,” Mr. Tajani said, adding, in an apparent show of institutional, and internal-party, strength, “My position is very clear.”

He said the government would “follow the European decisions” when it came to sending arms to Ukraine. Those small Italian arms shipments, while inconsequential on the battlefield, have become a political issue in a country with the lowest support in Europe for arms deliveries, fewer than 40 percent, according to eupinions.

A large peace rally on Saturday in Rome included the center-left establishment as well as populists opposed to arming Ukraine and a variety of pacifist and Roman Catholic groups.

Prominent among them was Giuseppe Conte, the former prime minister and now leader of the populist Five Star Movement, who, to rebuild his party from the left, has blamed a “bellicose push” by NATO and the European Union for the continuance of the war.

While Mr. Conte has for months adopted a pacifist line, the participation in the march of the center-left Democratic Party, which was a strong supporter of Ukraine in the prior government, surprised many.

“It’s nauseating,” said Nathalie Tocci, the director of the Institute for International Affairs in Rome, who considered the step a blatant political play to chase Five Star voters rather than a change of heart on Ukraine.

Marco Furfaro, a Democratic Party lawmaker, said the party had decided to take part to demand the withdrawal of Russian forces and show support for Ukraine, which he suggested, though would not outright say, his party would continue to vote to arm.

“If there is a new request in parliament, we’ll discuss it,” he said.

But with the specter of nuclear destruction in the air, Mr. Furfaro said it also joined the march “to put pressure on the international community, and in particular Europe,” to negotiate a cease-fire.

Analysts, noting Ms. Meloni and other major European leaders had no threat of upcoming elections, considered their support for Ukraine solid, protest or no protest.

“It all really starts and ends in the United States,” Ms. Tocci said. “I think as long as the U.S. holds the position that it does, I’m not concerned in the slightest.”

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/07 \$billions short of ‘fair share’ climate funding
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2022/nov/07/us-uk-fall-billions-short-climate-funding-cop27
GIST	<p>The US, UK, Canada and Australia have fallen billions of dollars short of their “fair share” of climate funding for developing countries, analysis shows.</p> <p>The assessment, by Carbon Brief, compares the share of international climate finance provided by rich countries with their share of carbon emissions to date, a measure of their responsibility for the climate crisis.</p> <p>Rich countries pledged to provide US\$100bn a year by 2020, although this target has been missed. The US share of this, based on its past emissions, would be \$40bn yet it provided only \$7.6bn in 2020, the latest year for which data is available. Australia and Canada gave only about a third of the funding indicated by the analysis, while the UK supplied three-quarters but still fell \$1.4bn short.</p> <p>The issue of climate finance will be critical to progress at the Cop27 summit, which began on Sunday in Egypt. Developing countries did little to cause the climate emergency, making funding from rich countries vital to create the trust needed for combined global action. The rich countries accept vulnerable countries face a “life or death situation” and need far more than \$100bn but delivery of the money has been contentious and slow.</p> <p>The \$100bn was intended to support the cutting of carbon emissions and work to adapt communities to the increasingly extreme weather being driven by global heating. However, a series of reports last week have laid bare how close the planet is to climate catastrophe, with “no credible pathway [of carbon cuts] to 1.5C in place”, the internationally agreed temperature limit to avoid the worst of the climate crisis.</p> <p>On funding for adaptation, the UN secretary general, António Guterres, said on Thursday: “We need a global surge in adaptation investment to save millions of lives from climate carnage.” However, some climate impacts are so severe they cannot be adapted to, and at Cop27 vulnerable nations will demand</p>

progress on “loss and damage” funding to rebuild after disasters. Rich countries have rejected such appeals in the past, fearing unlimited liability.

The new analysis covers the [24 “Annex II” countries](#) that account for 40% of historical emissions and are obliged to give climate finance under the UN climate treaty, including all of the G7 large economies. It shows some countries gave more than the share of the \$100bn indicated by their past emissions.

Switzerland’s funding was more than four times higher, and France and Norway’s was more than three times the amount. Japan, one of the largest providers of funding, supplied \$13bn, more than double the amount indicated. However, the funding from Japan and France was largely in loans, whereas that from the US, Canada, Australia and the UK were mostly grants. Grants are strongly preferred by developing countries, which often already carry high levels of debt.

[Mohamed Nasheed](#), the former president of the Maldives, said: “Basic justice demands that those most responsible for causing the climate crisis should financially support those who are suffering most on the frontline of climate change. Every year we see the storms get stronger and the waves get higher.”

“Our analysis for the V20 group of most climate-vulnerable nations finds that our countries have already suffered \$500bn in losses because of climate impacts,” Nasheed told the Guardian.

“Currently we face a debt crisis because so many of the assets that we took loans to pay for are being destroyed by climate change. Ease the debt burden and we can all play our part.” The V20 represents 1.5 billion people in 58 vulnerable countries.

Eddy Pérez, a director at Climate Action Network Canada, said: “Canada, the US and Australia have accumulated a huge debt to developing countries. This is an absolute scandal. These wealthy polluters have not only contributed very little to climate finance but are also partly responsible for the increase of international fossil fuels finance.”

Nafkote Dabi, the climate change policy lead at Oxfam International, said: “This new analysis shows rich countries continue to fail to deliver their long-standing pledge of \$100bn a year. The failure is all the more stark when you consider that the \$100bn is minuscule compared to what is required to address the climate crisis.

“Rich countries are largely responsible for the climate crisis – they must be held accountable for providing their fair share of climate finance.”

A [progress report on delivery of the \\$100bn](#) was published in the run-up to Cop27 by the governments of Germany and Canada. “It is abundantly clear that the global investments needed to respond to the climate change threat are much larger than \$100bn and that we need to turn our attention to setting an effective post-2025 climate finance goal,” say Germany’s special envoy for international climate action, Jennifer Morgan, and Canada’s climate change minister, Steven Guilbeault, in the foreword.

“There is no question that the needs are immense and that for the most vulnerable countries averting, minimising and addressing loss and damage is not an option, it is a life or death situation,” they say.

The progress report found only five countries – Japan, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden – had increased their funding pledges since 2021. The [Cop26](#) president, Alok Sharma, who commissioned the report, said trillions of dollars would be needed overall.

Responding to the analysis, a spokesperson for the Canadian government said: “Canada remains steadfast in its commitment to work with others to reach the collective US\$100bn goal as soon as possible and through to 2025. Canada recognises the urgency of scaling up climate finance. That is why Canada is [doubling its international climate finance](#) to \$5.3bn over the five-year period, starting in 2021.”

	<p>The US, UK and Australian governments did not respond to requests for comment. The UK government was recently criticised for failing to pay \$300m in promised climate funds before Cop27.</p> <p>“As has always been the case since this [UN] process started in 1992 in Rio, the critical enabling factor for delivery on climate promises is finance,” said Alden Meyer, at the E3G thinktank.</p> <p>Rachel Simon, at Climate Action Network Europe, said: “The world is watching and the clock is ticking. We will be holding governments to account at Cop27 to ensure they get on the right track. The money is there – it’s a question of political will.”</p>
	Return to Top

HEADLINE	11/07 Russia deepens ties w/NKorea, Iran
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/nov/07/russia-ukraine-war-iran-north-korea-arms-ties
GIST	<p>Russian arms procurement from Iran and North Korea heralds an increasing convergence of military and diplomatic interests between Moscow and two countries regarded as international pariahs.</p> <p>Amid renewed accusations from Washington that Russia is attempting to procure large amounts of artillery ammunition from Pyongyang, on top of the missiles and kamikaze and other drones it has already bought from Iran, Moscow’s arms procurement blitz has flagged up the mounting logistical problems in Vladimir Putin’s war against Ukraine.</p> <p>According to one expert interviewed by the Guardian, Russia may be seeking to stabilise its production and supply of key artillery shells during the coming winter by seeking ammunition from North Korea and elsewhere, to allow its factories to catch up with production.</p> <p>The Kremlin’s continuing urgent efforts to source weapons suggest that Russia envisages fighting continuing in Ukraine well into next year despite numerous a series of recent battlefield setbacks for its forces in the eastern Donbas region and southern Ukraine.</p> <p>The latest US intelligence assessment on Russian attempts to procure artillery from North Korea emerged on Wednesday, which suggested that Pyongyang may be attempting to disguise weapons supplies through countries in the Middle East and elsewhere.</p> <p>“Our information indicates that the DPRK is covertly supplying Russia’s war in Ukraine with a significant number of artillery shells, while obfuscating the real destination of the arms shipments by trying to make it appear as though they’re being sent to countries in the Middle East or north Africa,” John Kirby, spokesperson for the national security council, told reporters.</p> <p>Although Kirby did not name transit countries, North Korea supplies weapons to Iran and the two countries also collaborate on missile development.</p> <p>North Korea is particularly attractive to Russia as a source of rockets and shells, producing the same calibre of weapons for North Korean variants of Soviet-era systems and holding large stockpiles.</p> <p>North Korea “may represent the single biggest source of compatible legacy artillery ammunition outside of Russia, including domestic production facilities to further supplies”, Joseph Dempsey, a research associate at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, explained earlier this year.</p> <p>In addition to well-established routes for armaments supply via the Middle East, North Korea also has good rail connections with the Russian far east via a route from its northern town of Tumangang to Khasan over the border.</p> <p>Although North Korean arms sales are covered by UN sanctions – in theory backed by Moscow – Pyongyang has managed to continue supplying armaments.</p>

“North Korean arms do get about,” Jack Watling, a senior research fellow at the Royal United Services Institute, told the Guardian, “and there are fairly established routes into Iran.

“The Russians are running short in a number of key areas not least 122mm artillery rounds and North Korea has a considerable stockpile of those munitions. It is entirely plausible they are going to Russia and likely going through different routes.

“What Russia is trying to do is stabilise its munitions supply through winter to backfill the gap until its own industrial base can start churning out,” adds Watling, adding that Russia arms manufacturers had encountered a serious logjam in the chemical production for high explosives.

And while the convergence of Russian and Iranian interests – not least over their joint military support for the regime of Bashar al-Assad in Syria – has been well documented, North Korea has now been drawn more closely into that axis.

With Pyongyang one of the few countries to recognise Moscow’s attempted illegal annexation of four regions of Ukraine under partial Russian occupation, Russia in turn used its security council veto earlier this year to block new sanctions against North Korea.

Indeed, earlier this year Asian thinktanks, speculating on the increasing cooperation between Moscow and Pyongyang, have suggested that as well as probably benefiting from cash transfers from Russia, North Korea may be looking for technology and materials for its ballistic missile programmes that are subject to sanctions.

Public statements by Putin and North Korea’s leader, Kim Jong-un, have mentioned their joint desire to broaden their “comprehensive and constructive bilateral relations”.

One consequence of that ever tightening relationship – far from the frontlines of Ukraine – has been the increasing sense of impunity being enjoyed by North Korea as Pyongyang has continued to escalate tensions this week with a series of missile launches that has rattled both neighbouring South Korea and Japan.

Few are in any doubt that the relationship will deepen, confronted by Russia’s mounting problems prosecuting its war against Ukraine.

Speaking in September US state department deputy spokesperson Vedant Patel underlined the trajectory in a briefing for reporters.

“This purchase [of North Korean munitions] indicates that the Russian military continues to suffer from severe supply shortages in Ukraine due in part to export controls and sanctions,” Patel said.

“We expect Russia to try to purchase additional North Korean military equipment going forward, as well.”

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/07 Day 257 of the Russia invasion
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/nov/07/russia-ukraine-war-at-a-glance-what-we-know-on-day-257-of-the-invasion
GIST	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ukraine is bracing for power blackouts and fresh Russian attacks on its energy infrastructure. Russia “is concentrating forces and means for a possible repetition of massive attacks on our infrastructure, primarily energy”, said Volodymyr Zelenskiy, the Ukrainian president. Ukraine faced a 32% deficit in projected power supply on Monday, said Sergei Kovalenko, CEO of Yasno, a major supplier of energy to the capital. “This is a lot, and it’s force majeure,” he said. About 500 power generators were being sent to Ukraine by 17 EU countries as 4.5m Ukrainians were left without power.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kyiv’s mayor urged residents to prepare for a worst-case scenario by making emergency plans to leave the city and stay with friends or family. Vitali Klitschko urged residents to “consider everything” including loss of power and water. “If you have extended family or friends outside Kyiv, where there is autonomous water supply, an oven, heating, please keep in mind the possibility of staying there for a certain amount of time.” • Ukraine’s Russian-occupied city of Kherson was cut off from water and electricity supplies on Sunday after an airstrike and damage to the Kakhovka dam, local officials said. “In Kherson and a number of other areas in the region, there is temporarily no electricity or water supply,” the city’s Moscow-installed administration said on Telegram. Russia accused Ukraine of an act of “sabotage”. • Ukraine’s military said Russia was urging residents of Kherson to evacuate as soon as possible, sending them warning messages on their phones on Sunday. Russia was “occupying and evacuating” Kherson simultaneously, trying to convince Ukrainians its force are leaving when in fact they are digging in, Nataliya Humenyuk, a spokesperson for Ukraine’s southern forces, told state television. The Kremlin-installed administration in Kherson already has expelled tens of thousands of civilians from the city. • Russian forces are stepping up their strikes in a fiercely contested region of eastern Ukraine, worsening the already tough conditions for residents and the Ukrainian army, Ukrainian authorities said. “Very fierce Russian attacks on Donetsk region are continuing. The enemy is suffering serious losses there,” Zelenskiy said in his nightly video address. • US officials have reportedly warned the Ukrainian government in private that it needs to signal an openness to negotiating with Russia. Officials in Washington warned that “Ukraine fatigue” among allies could worsen if Kyiv continued to be closed to negotiations, the Washington Post reported. US officials told the paper that Ukraine’s position on negotiations with Russia was wearing thin among allies worried about the economic effects of a protracted war. • External power was restored to Ukraine’s Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant two days after it was disconnected from the power grid when Russian shelling damaged high voltage lines, the UN nuclear watchdog said. Europe’s largest nuclear plant needs electricity to maintain vital cooling systems, but it had been running on emergency diesel generators since Russian shelling severed its outside connections. • The US national security adviser, Jake Sullivan, held secretive talks with top Russian officials in hopes of reducing the risk of nuclear conflict, the Wall Street Journal has reported. It cited US and allied officials as saying that Sullivan held previously undisclosed conversations in recent months with the Kremlin aide Yuri Ushakov and the Russian security council secretary Nikolai Patrushev, Sullivan’s counterpart. The White House declined to comment on the report.
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	11/06 Experts: permanent DST will hurt health
SOURCE	https://www.cnn.com/2022/11/06/health/permanent-daylight-savings-health-harms-wellness/index.html
GIST	<p>The end of Daylight Saving Time is upon us again, an autumn tradition when the United States, Europe, most of Canada and a number of other countries move their clocks backwards an hour in a sort of Groundhog Day trust fall. We’ll move them forward (again) next spring when governments put daylight saving back in place.</p> <p>But are we putting our trust in an unhealthy, outdated idea?</p> <p>Not according to the United States Senate, which in March passed the Sunshine Protection Act of 2021 – if it becomes law, Daylight Saving Time will be permanent.</p> <p>“The call to end the antiquated practice of clock changing is gaining momentum throughout the nation,” said Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL), who first introduced the bill in the US Senate, in a statement. Florida’s legislature voted to make Daylight Saving Time permanent in Florida in 2018, but it can’t go into effect until it is federal law as well.</p>

The bill still has to make its way through the US House of Representatives and be signed into law by the President. If or when that is the case, we'll move our clocks forward and leave them that way, permanently living one hour ahead of the sun.

However, a growing number of sleep experts say the act of moving our clocks forward in the spring is ruining our health. [Studies over the last 25 years](#) have shown the one-hour change disrupts body rhythms tuned to Earth's rotation, adding fuel to the debate over whether having Daylight Saving Time in any form is a good idea.

"I'm one of the many sleep experts that knows it's a bad idea," said Dr. Elizabeth Klerman, a professor of neurology in the division of sleep medicine at Harvard Medical School.

"Your body clock stays with (natural) light not with the clock on your wall," Klerman said. "And there's no evidence that [your body fully shifts](#) to the new time."

Dr. Phyllis Zee, director of the Center for Circadian and Sleep Medicine at Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine in Evanston, Illinois, also opposes Daylight Saving Time.

"Between March and November your body gets less morning light and more evening light, which can throw off your circadian rhythm," she said.

Standard time, which we enter when we move our clocks back in the fall, is much closer to the sun's day and night cycle, Zee said. This cycle has set our circadian rhythm, or body clock, for centuries.

That internal timer controls not just when you sleep, but also when you want to eat, exercise or work, as well as "your blood pressure, your heart rate and your cortisol rhythm," Zee added.

Our bodies need the early morning light to set our internal body clock, experts say.

A [call to ban](#) Daylight Saving Time for good has come from the American Academy of Sleep Medicine: "Current evidence best supports the adoption of year-round standard time, which aligns best with human circadian biology and provides distinct benefits for public health and safety."

The proposal has been endorsed by more than 20 medical, scientific, and civic organizations, including the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, the National Parent Teacher Association, the National Safety Council, the Society for Research on Biological Rhythms and the World Sleep Society.

What's the harm?

When our internal clocks are offset from the solar day-night cycle by even one hour we develop what sleep experts call "[social jet lag](#)." Studies have shown social jet lag increases the risk of [metabolic disorders such as diabetes](#), raises the risk of [heart disease and stroke](#), worsens [mood disorders such as depression](#), affects the [digestive and endocrine systems](#) and shortens our [sleep duration](#). It can even [reduce life expectancy](#).

A [2003 study](#) found getting one hour less sleep for two weeks had the same effect on thinking and motor skills as going without sleep for two full nights. Reducing sleep by 90 minutes from the [recommended](#) 7 to 8 hours for adults [altered the DNA of immune cells](#) and boosted inflammation, a key cause of chronic disease, according to another study.

Making the time change permanent would make the chronic effects of any sleep loss more severe, not only "because we have to go to work an hour earlier for an additional 5 months every year but also because body clocks are usually later in winter than in summer with reference to the sun clock," according to a statement from the [Society for Research on Biological Rhythms](#).

“The combination of DST and winter would therefore make the differences between body clocks and the social clock even worse and would negatively affect our health even more,” the authors concluded.

Why did the Senate pass the bill?

There are reasons the US Senate unanimously passed the Sunshine Protection Act. [Proponents](#) say that extra daylight in the evening cuts down on [car accidents and crime](#), and increases opportunities for commerce and recreation, as people prefer to shop and exercise during daylight hours.

However, research has shown both [heart attacks](#) and [fatal car accidents](#) increase after the clock falls forward in the spring. Children also [end up going to school in the morning while it is still dark](#) – with disastrous consequences.

When President Richard Nixon signed [a permanent Daylight Saving Time into law](#) in January 1974, it was a popular move. But by the end of the month [Florida’s governor](#) had called for the law’s repeal after eight schoolchildren were hit by cars in the dark. Schools across the country delayed start times until the sun came up.

By summer, public approval had plummeted, and in early October [Congress voted to switch back to standard time](#).

A similar backlash occurred when the US first implemented [Daylight Saving Time in 1918](#), as a way to reduce demand for electricity usage by adding sunlight to the end of the day in response to World War I. ([Studies](#) since have found little to no cost savings from the practice.) The time switch was so unpopular that the law was repealed the following year.

“The United States has tried permanent daylight saving time twice before and ended it early. The UK tried once before and ended it early. Russia tried it once, so did India and ended it early,” Klerman said. “I think we should learn from history.”

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/04 Spate of global assassination attempts
SOURCE	https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/spate-of-global-assassination-attempts-hints-at-a-violent-new-era/ar-AA13KhMT
GIST	<p>The attempted assassination this week of former Pakistani leader Imran Khan came just days after an intruder broke into the San Francisco home of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) in what prosecutors say was a failed bid to harm or kidnap her. Weeks before that, a man approached former Argentine president Cristina Fernández de Kirchner in Buenos Aires and tried to shoot her in the face at close range.</p> <p>That attack followed the July assassination of former Japanese prime minister Shinzo Abe by a man wielding a homemade gun in Nara city. And Abe was slain almost exactly a year after gunmen killed Haitian President Jovenel Moïse in a raid on his home in Port-au-Prince.</p> <p>Together, these high-profile acts of violence potentially point to a new, volatile era in global politics, experts say. After years in which terrorist bombings dominated the headlines, this new spate of attacks is reminiscent of the 1960s and 1970s, when major U.S. figures such as President John F. Kennedy and civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. were killed in pivotal moments.</p> <p>“There’s never going to be an end to individuals who want to assassinate public individuals,” said Colin P. Clarke, director of research and policy at the Soufan Group, an intelligence and security consultancy. But Clarke also said there were several factors that could lead to a rise in assassinations, including the “decline, at least in some parts of the world, of jihadi organizations” that favored different tactics.</p> <p>In their place, “you’ve got the rise of far-right extremists who are far more decentralized,” he said. “And then you’ve got what people are calling ‘salad bar terrorism,’ which is when they kind of pick and choose different aspects of what motivates them to engage in these types of acts.”</p>

Data from the University of Maryland's Global Terrorism Database (GTD), which includes figures up to 2020, shows a sharp increase in assassination attempts on government figures around the world starting in 2014. The number of assassinations has stayed consistently high since then — even as the number of terrorist attacks has fallen.

It's a trend that may have been overlooked in recent years. Erin Miller, program manager at GTD, noted that most of the attacks targeted low- to mid-level officials — and not prominent political leaders such as Khan or Pelosi. The most recent statistics, she said, were dominated by insurgent-led attacks in Afghanistan before the Taliban takeover in 2021.

GTD's data suggests that the late 1980s was another period when assassinations spiked. Miller said terrorist attacks such as suicide bombings that often kill indiscriminately were used much less then.

"Targeting political leadership was a tactic used to get attention for a cause with less risk of alienating the civilian population," Miller said. "In more recent years, assailants adopt both targeted assassinations and mass-casualty strategies."

Part of the shift may be structural. As groups like the Islamic State lost their territory, Clarke said, there was a rise in violence committed by people working alone, some of whom had been radicalized online to hate or target specific individuals.

To some extent, there may also be a tactical logic to the shift. Assassination attempts on individuals can often prompt significant political changes. Some attacks have changed the course of history, though not always in precisely the way their perpetrators intended: The killing of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Austria-Hungary in 1914, for example, is considered the spark for World War I.

Views of assassinations can also change over time. In India, the assassin who killed beloved independence leader Mohandas K. Gandhi has retroactively been branded a "patriot" by some supporters of the country's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party.

Some historians consider the assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin by a far-right extremist in 1995 a disastrous moment for the Middle East peace process. But almost three decades later, the far right has emerged as kingmaker in the country's most recent election.

Even in Japan, the shocking assassination of Abe in July sparked a surprising turn: The country took the alleged assassin's motives seriously.

The alleged killer, Tetsuya Yamagami, told police he wanted to carry out the assassination because his mother had made large donations to the Unification Church, a religious group with which Abe apparently had close ties. After the killing, Abe's former party pledged to end its relationship with the church, though it later backtracked.

Japan, while generally nonviolent, has a significant history of political assassinations. But some countries that had long avoided attacks on senior officials have seen assassinations in recent years: Two British lawmakers have been killed in separate politically motivated attacks since 2016.

In Brazil, where there has long been political violence around election periods, the number of violent incidents involving political party representatives and supporters in the lead-up to the 2022 vote "eclipsed" that in the election four years before, according to data [from the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project](#).

At least some of the apparent rise in assassinations may be due to technological changes. Abe was shot with a "craft-made" gun created with readily available materials. Designs for similar weapons, which can be bought without a background trace and sometimes produced in a way that avoids metal detectors, can be found easily online.

There have been reported assassinations attempts via drone in recent years, such as the 2018 attack on Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro during an event in Caracas. Maduro survived the alleged attempt, a low-tech echo of U.S. drone attacks like the one that killed Iranian military leader Qasem Soleimani in 2020.

“Cruder technology lowers the barriers to entry for attackers, allowing even untrained or unprepared extremists ... to attempt serious plots,” Bruce Hoffman and Jacob Ware, two experts in counterterrorism at the Council on Foreign Relations, recently [wrote for the War on the Rocks](#) website.

Experts have [also noted an increase](#) in assassinations committed with state backing, including the murder of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi, the killing of Kim Jong Nam by North Korean agents, and numerous deaths linked back to the Russian state.

But the ever-widening political polarization around the world, aided by online echo chambers that can radicalize potential perpetrators and demonize potential victims, has only added to the risk of assassination — as in the attack at Pelosi’s home that left her husband, Paul, wounded.

Clarke noted that figures on both the left and the right in the United States have been targeted in politically motivated attacks. In some ways, the spate of attempted killings felt worse than what came before.

“We’ve been here before. We’ve survived it,” Clarke said of U.S. political violence. “But there are people I speak to who say this feels fundamentally different. It feels like nothing’s beyond the pale, at least in terms of the rhetoric.”

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/06 Florida braces for hurricane by midweek
SOURCE	https://www.wsj.com/articles/floridas-east-coast-braces-for-possible-hurricane-by-midweek-11667767776
GIST	<p>A weather system brewing in the Atlantic Ocean north of Puerto Rico may hit Florida’s east coast as a tropical storm or hurricane later this week, the National Hurricane Center said Sunday.</p> <p>The low-pressure area could become a tropical or subtropical storm by Sunday night or early Monday, the hurricane center said. The system is forecast to approach parts of the Bahamas and coastal Florida at or near hurricane strength on Wednesday and Thursday, about six weeks after Hurricane Ian made landfall and devastated parts of southwest Florida.</p> <p>Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis on Sunday encouraged Floridians to be prepared.</p> <p>“Hurricane season is apparently not done with us yet,” said Mike Brennan, the hurricane center’s acting deputy director, during a briefing Sunday.</p> <p>The scale of the system is very large, which means it will likely affect a wide area no matter where the center goes, he said. Hurricane-hunter aircraft are expected to fly through the developing system on Monday to further explore its formation.</p> <p>Forecasts indicate the storm will be significantly weaker than Ian, which slammed into Florida as a powerful Category 4 storm with maximum sustained winds of 150 miles an hour and killed at least 130 people. The threshold for hurricanes is sustained winds of at least 74 miles an hour.</p> <p>“Regardless of development, there is an increasing risk of coastal flooding, tropical-storm-force winds, heavy rainfall, rough surf and beach erosion along much of the southeastern United States coast, the Florida east coast, and portions of the central and northwestern Bahamas,” the hurricane center said.</p> <p>Though the peak of hurricane season typically comes in mid-September, the season runs through November.</p>

HEADLINE	11/05 Wells running dry in drought-hit Southwest
SOURCE	https://www.cnn.com/2022/11/05/us/arizona-water-foreign-owned-farms-climate/index.html
GIST	<p>La Paz County, ArizonaCNN — Workers with the water district in Wenden, Arizona, saw something remarkable last year as they slowly lowered a camera into the drought-stricken town’s well: The water was moving.</p> <p>But the aquifer which sits below the small desert town in the southwestern part of the state is not a river; it’s a massive, underground reservoir which stores water built up over thousands of years. And that water is almost always still.</p> <p>Gary Saiter, a longtime resident and head of the Wenden Water Improvement District, said the water was moving because it was being pumped rapidly out of the ground by a neighboring well belonging to Al Dahra, a United Arab Emirates-based company farming alfalfa in the Southwest.</p> <p>Al Dahra did not respond to multiple requests for comment on this story.</p> <p>“The well guys and I have never seen anything like this before,” Saiter told CNN. The farm was “pumping and it was sucking the water through the aquifer.”</p> <p>Groundwater is the lifeblood of the rural Southwest, but just as the Colorado River Basin is in crisis, aquifers are rapidly depleting from decades of overuse, worsening drought and rampant agricultural growth.</p> <p>Residents and farms pull water from the same underground pools, and as the water table declines, the thing determining how long a well lasts is how deeply it was drilled.</p> <p>Now frustration is growing in Arizona’s La Paz County, as shallower wells run dry amid the Southwest’s worst drought in 1,200 years. Much of the frustration is pointed at the area’s huge, foreign-owned farms growing thirsty crops like alfalfa, which ultimately get shipped to feed cattle and other livestock overseas.</p> <p>“You can’t take water and export it out of the state, there’s laws about that,” said Arizona geohydrologist Marvin Glotfelty, a well-drilling expert. “But you can take ‘virtual’ water and export it; alfalfa, cotton, electricity or anything created in part from the use of water.”</p> <p>Residents and local officials say lax groundwater laws give agriculture the upper hand, allowing farms to pump unlimited water as long as they own or lease the property to drill wells into. In around 80% of the state, Arizona has no laws overseeing how much water corporate megafarms are using, nor is there any way for the state to track it.</p> <p>But rural communities in La Paz County know the water is disappearing beneath their feet.</p> <p>Shallow, residential wells in the county started drying up in 2015, local officials say, and deeper municipal well levels have steadily declined. In Salome, local water utility owner Bill Farr told CNN his well – which supplies water to more than 200 customers, including the local schools – is “nearing the end of its useful life.”</p> <p>And in Wenden, water in the town well has been plummeting. Saiter told CNN the depth-to-water – how deep below the surface the top of the water table is – has dropped from about 100 feet in the late 1950s to about 540 feet in 2022, already far beyond what an average residential well can reach. Saiter is anxious the farms’ rapid water use could push the water table too low for the town well to draw safe water from.</p>

La Paz County supervisor Holly Irwin told CNN getting the state to act on – or even acknowledge – the region’s dwindling water supply has been a “frustrating” yearslong battle which has left her community feeling “forgotten.”

Middle East agriculture companies “have depleted their [water], that’s why they are here,” Irwin said. “That’s what angers people the most. We should be taking care of our own, and we just allow them to come in, purchase property and continue to punch holes in the ground.”

A resource as good as gold

In 2018, Saudi Arabia finalized a ban on growing thirsty crops like alfalfa and hay to feed livestock and cattle. The reason was simple: the arid Middle East – also struggling with [climate change-fueled drought](#) – is running out of water, and agriculture is a huge consumer.

But vast dairy operations are a point of national pride in the Middle East, according to Eckart Woertz, director of the Germany-based GIGA Institute for Middle East Studies. So, they needed to find water somewhere else.

“They have all their cows there and they need feeding. That feedstock comes from abroad,” Woertz told CNN.

Valued at \$14.3 billion, the Almarai Company – which owns about 10,000 acres of farmland in Arizona under its subsidiary, Fondomonte – is one of the biggest players in the Middle East’s dairy supply. The company also owns about 3,500 acres in agriculture-heavy Southern California, according to public land records, where they use [Colorado River water](#) to irrigate crops.

Woertz said while most of the company’s cattle feed is purchased on the open market, Almarai took the extra step of buying farmland abroad, as part of a growing trend in foreign-owned farmland in the US.

Foreign-owned farmland in the West increased from around 1.25 million acres in 2010 to nearly three million acres in 2020, according to data from the US Department of Agriculture. In the Midwest, foreign-owned farmland has nearly quadrupled.

“It gives you that sense you’re closer to the source,” Woertz added. “The sense that you own land or lease land somewhere else and have direct bilateral access [to water] gives you a sense of maybe false security.”

In the high desert of Arizona, emerald-green fields stretch for miles alongside dry tumbleweeds and Saguaro cactus.

The Fondomonte-owned Vicksburg Ranch near Salome is massive. The company spent \$47.5 million to buy nearly 10,000 acres of land there in 2014, and it leases additional farmland from the state.

Huge storage facilities were erected to hold the harvests. Rows of small houses were built for the farm’s workers, all surrounded by flowering desert shrubs. Tractor trailers filled with bales of alfalfa hay rumble down the highway, which local officials told CNN they had to repair because of the increased agricultural traffic.

The alfalfa on the trucks is eventually shipped to feed cattle in Saudi Arabia.

“They’ve definitely increased production,” Irwin said. “They’ve grown so much since they’ve been here.”

Almarai was transparent about why it wanted the land, according to an article on the purchase [from Arab News](#): The transaction was part of “continuous efforts to improve and secure its supply of the highest quality alfalfa hay from outside the Kingdom to support its dairy business.”

“It is also in line with the Saudi government direction toward conserving local resources,” Arab News added.

Representatives of Fondomonte declined an interview request for this story, but Jordan Rose, the company's Arizona attorney, provided a statement: "Fondomonte decided to invest in the southwest United States just as hundreds of other agricultural businesses have because of the high-quality soils, and climatic conditions that allow growth of some of the finest quality alfalfa in the world."

Rose added the farm installed "the most technologically advanced conservation oriented watering systems available on the market."

Indeed, there is nothing illegal about foreign-owned farming in the US. And many American farmers use the West's water to grow crops which are eventually exported around the globe.

But amid the worst drought in centuries, residents and officials have questioned the merit of allowing countries, which themselves are running out of water, unlimited access to a resource as good as gold in the Southwest.

Cynthia Campbell, water resources management adviser for the city of Phoenix, has been watching the La Paz County water situation with frustration.

Phoenix currently gets most of its water from local rivers and the Central Arizona Project, which diverts Colorado River water to Phoenix and Tucson. But it could use rural groundwater as a safety net in the coming years if the city's [primary sources are further restricted](#).

That is, if there is any groundwater left by then.

"We are literally exporting our economy overseas," Campbell said. "I'm sorry, but there's no Saudi Arabian milk coming back to Southern California or Arizona. The value of that agricultural output is not coming through in value to the US."

'This is home'

Despite the ever-looming water crisis, people are still drawn to small Southwest towns like Wenden and Salome because of the low home prices and the freedom of desert living.

While housing costs in the country rocket upward, rural Arizona has remained a stubbornly affordable place to live. Homes cost between \$30,000 and \$40,000, and residential taxes paid to the county are below \$300 per year, Saiter, the head of Wenden's water district and a longtime resident, told CNN.

"People are able to afford to live here, versus Phoenix," Gary's wife, De Vona Saiter, told CNN. Median incomes in the county are low, "but you can still have a beautiful life."

The Saiters' house and rental properties around town – as well as De Vona's mother Gloria Kaisor's home down the street – are decorated with hand-drawn art, gardens and antiques.

Kaisor is a longtime resident who first moved to Wenden with her family in the 1960s. After living in Phoenix for years, she gravitated back to the rural area.

"This is home," Kaisor said. "You don't hear a noise. It's quiet. I don't want to be around a lot of people. You can do whatever you want."

Yet the impacts of living near a corporate farm are starting to pile up.

Kaisor's home was inundated with silty, wet mud this summer. Rainfall runoff from a recent monsoon flood carried it from the farm right into Wenden. Gary Saiter believes Al Dahra farm staff have rerouted natural waterways, forcing the rainfall into town rather than out into the desert washes.

Kaisor and her neighbors' fences are reinforced with sheet metal to try to stop mud and water from coming into their houses, but Kaisor was trapped in her house during a storm earlier this year.

"The whole property was full of mud," De Vona Saiter said.

Al Dahra did not respond to CNN's questions for this story, including questions about its water usage, the uptick in residential flooding and potential rerouting of natural waterways.

The company did provide a statement to the Arizona Republic for [a story published in 2019](#): "Water resources in Arizona must be managed wisely in order to preserve our quality of life and to protect the state's economic health," Al Dahra said. "The company is fully committed to Arizona and plans to remain here for the long-term."

Living near the Al Dahra farm also brings more frequent and alarming drought-related impacts.

When it gets windy, a "dirt wall" of soil and dust whips up from the alfalfa fields, exacerbating the Saiters' allergies. And most noticeably, the ground is literally sinking as the water below the surface gets pumped out.

The floor in De Vona's shop has sunk a couple inches, she said, and the ground around one well casing has sunk about a foot; so much the wellhead needed to be cut and resized.

With all of this, Gary Saiter doesn't care if the farm is owned by a company overseas. The way he sees it, it doesn't make much of a difference who owns the farm; he just wishes they were better neighbors.

"I am kind of ambivalent about the Saudis," Saiter said. "You can't control where people sell stuff, and it's going to go somewhere."

"I just don't like the crops they're growing and the water they're pumping," he added.

Kari Avila, superintendent and athletics director for Salome High School, believes the farms are providing local economic benefits. Rose, Fondomonte's Arizona attorney, told CNN in an email the company is the fourth-largest employer in the county.

"They employ a lot of people," Avila told CNN. "If they weren't farming it, someone else would be. A lot of people are upset it's not Americans farming."

Avila praised the farms for their internship programs and career fairs. Last year, Al Dahra donated an irrigation pump and generator to water Salome's high school fields, which had been drying up. Avila said the pump installation for the field was fast and took just a few weeks.

But even as the companies are trying to invest in the area, many still question whether those benefits are worth it as water disappears.

"It's great," Irwin, the La Paz County supervisor said, "but if you can't turn your faucet on in five years, that sh*t's not going to matter."

'You can't manage what you don't measure'

The reason some rural residents feel powerless about the fate of their groundwater is because they say Arizona's state lawmakers have thus far not acted to protect it.

The last time the state passed regulations around groundwater was in 1980, with a law creating certain zones in mostly urban areas, where officials had to ensure they were replenishing underground aquifers and not pumping them dry.

The laws governing the so-called active management areas, or AMAs, are strong compared to groundwater laws in other Southwest states, said Kathleen Ferris, a former top state water official and senior researcher at Arizona State University's Kyl Center for Water Policy.

But "outside of the AMAs, not so much," Ferris told CNN.

About 80% of the state falls outside the active management areas, with no restrictions on how much groundwater can be pumped and no way to monitor it.

"It can't get any worse" than Arizona's lack of regulation on rural groundwater, Ferris said. "Let's put it that way."

Water officials can measure whether water levels in the aquifers are going up or down, but because groundwater is so lightly regulated in rural areas, they don't have enough data to answer a crucial question: Exactly how much water is left?

"That is one of the challenges of our state; you can't manage what you don't measure," said top Arizona water official Tom Buschatzke, the director of the state's Department of Water Resources. "We do the best we can with the data and estimated data that we have, but it really begs questions about how much benefit we can really provide."

As the West's water crisis grows more intense, groundwater reform has become a flashpoint in this year's election campaigns.

Arizona attorney general candidate Kris Mayes, a Democrat, has seized on the state's practice of leasing public land to corporate farms, including more than 6,000 acres leased to Fondomonte, according to the state land department.

A recent [investigation by the Arizona Republic](#) found Fondomonte – the second-largest agricultural lessor of Arizona land – is paying the state a heavily discounted rate which does not take their water usage into account.

Mayes said she thinks the leases violate the state constitution and has vowed to cancel them if she's elected.

"It shouldn't have happened in the first place," Mayes told Irwin in September, standing outside Fondomonte's farm. "We can get these leases canceled, and we should. We are essentially giving our water away for free to a Saudi corporation, and that has to come to an end."

The Arizona State Land Department is studying the state's water resources in western Arizona, department spokesman Bill Fathauer told CNN. But he added it does not have the authority to implement additional groundwater restrictions.

"The comprehensive data determined from these studies will allow the Department to make an informed decision about not only future land use in these areas but also help determine what the future value of the land is as well," Fathauer said in an email.

The kind of sweeping water reforms Arizona needs must ultimately come from the state legislature, says outgoing state House member Regina Cobb, a Republican.

For years, Cobb [tried to advance bills](#) to allow local officials to regulate their aquifers. The bills never got a committee hearing, Cobb said, never mind making it to the floor for a vote. CNN reached out to Gov. Doug Ducey and top Arizona lawmakers in the state House and Senate for comment; none responded.

As the Colorado River shrinks and Arizona's share of the water continues to be cut, Cobb told CNN the state's approach to groundwater has been unthinkable.

	<p>“Why are we allowing a foreign company to come into Arizona – which is drought-stricken right now – and have a sweetheart deal [on leases], when we are trying to conserve as much water as we can?” she asked.</p> <p>“It boggles my mind.”</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	11/06 Ex-PM Khan: march on Pakistan capital
SOURCE	https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/pm-khan-march-pakistani-capital-resume-tuesday-92754633
GIST	<p>LAHORE, Pakistan -- Former Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan said Sunday that a protest march toward the capital, which was suspended after he was wounded by a gunshot in an apparent attempt on his life, will resume Tuesday.</p> <p>Sitting in a wheelchair, his right leg bandaged and elevated, Khan spoke from the Shaukat Khanum hospital, where he was admitted Thursday after he received bullet wounds in his right leg.</p> <p>Khan repeated his demand for an investigation into the shooting and the resignation of three powerful personalities in the government and the military whom he alleges were involved in staging the attack on him.</p> <p>Khan's march on the capital was suspended in Wazirabad, a district in eastern Punjab province, after a gunman opened fire, wounding him and killing one of his supporters. Thirteen others were hurt. He said the march would pick up again from Wazirabad.</p> <p>Khan was ousted from office in April in a no-confidence vote in parliament. He organized a march on Islamabad to pressure Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif's government to hold early elections but Sharif says elections will take place as scheduled, in 2023. Khan led an initial protest march in May but it ended when supporters clashed with police in the capital.</p> <p>Khan's protest march, which started Oct. 28, was peaceful until Thursday's attack. The shooting has raised concerns about growing political instability in Pakistan, which has a history of political violence and assassinations.</p> <p>Khan said the march, to be resumed Tuesday, will take 10 to 15 days to reach Rawalpindi, where convoys from other parts of the country are expected to join the rally. He said he will keep in touch with the main march participants through a media link and will eventually lead the “sea of people” toward Islamabad.</p> <p>Khan accused Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif, Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah Khan and army Gen. Faisal Naseer of working with the Inter-Services Intelligence, Pakistan's spy agency, to orchestrate the shooting. The minister and the former premier are not related.</p> <p>Khan offered no evidence for his allegations, which were rejected by Sharif's government and the military spokesman said the allegations were not true.</p> <p>Khan was discharged from the hospital later Sunday and moved to his ancestral home in Lahore.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	11/06 NKorea: missile tests practice attack South
SOURCE	https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/north-korea-missile-tests-practice-attack-south-us-92780961
GIST	<p>SEOUL, South Korea -- North Korea's military said Monday its recent barrage of missile tests were practices to “mercilessly” strike key South Korean and U.S. targets such as air bases and operation command systems with a variety of missiles that are likely nuclear-capable.</p>

The North's announcement underscored leader Kim Jong Un's determination not to back down in the face of his rivals' push to expand their military exercises. But some experts say Kim also used their drills as an excuse to modernize his nuclear arsenal and increase his leverage in future dealings with Washington and Seoul.

North Korea fired dozens of missiles and flew warplanes toward the sea last week — triggering evacuation alerts in some South Korean and Japanese areas — in protest of massive U.S.-South Korean air force drills that the North views as an invasion rehearsal.

U.S. and South Korean officials responded they would further enhance their joint training events and warned the North that the use of nuclear weapons would result in the end of Kim's regime.

“The recent corresponding military operations by the Korean People's Army are a clear answer of (North Korea) that the more persistently the enemies' provocative military moves continue, the more thoroughly and mercilessly the KPA will counter them,” the General Staff of North Korea's military said in a statement carried by state media.

It said the weapons tests involved ballistic missiles loaded with dispersion warheads and underground infiltration warheads meant to launch strikes on enemy air bases; ground-to-air missiles designed to “annihilate” enemy aircraft at different altitudes and distances; and strategic cruise missiles that fell in international waters about 80 kilometers (50 miles) off South Korea's southeastern coastal city of Ulsan.

The North's military said it carried out an important test of a ballistic missile with a special functional warhead missioned with “paralyzing the operation command system of the enemy.” It said it also fired tactical ballistic missiles and other weapons from super-large, multiple-rocket launchers.

It didn't explicitly mention a reported launch Thursday of an intercontinental ballistic missile aimed at hitting the U.S. mainland. Some experts say almost all other North Korean missiles launched last week were likely short-range, many of them nuclear-capable weapons. They say those missiles place key military targets in South Korea, including U.S. military bases there, within striking range.

“The KPA General Staff once again clarifies that it will continue to correspond with all the anti-(North Korea) war drills of the enemy with the sustained, resolute and overwhelming practical military measures,” it said.

Later Monday, South Korea's military disputed some of the North's accounts of its missile tests. Spokesperson Kim Jun-rak said South Korea didn't detect the North's cruise missile launches and that it's also notable that North Korea didn't mention what Seoul assessed as an abnormal flight by an ICBM.

This year's “Vigilant Storm” air force drills between the United States and South Korea were the largest-ever for the annual fall maneuvers. The drills involved 240 warplanes including advanced F-35 fighter jets from both countries. The allies were initially supposed to run the drills for five days ending on Friday, but extended the training by another day in reaction to the North's missile tests.

On Saturday, the final day of the air force exercises, the United States flew two B-1B supersonic bombers over South Korea in a display of strength against North Korea, the aircraft's first such flyover since December 2017.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said the participation of the B-1Bs in the joint drills demonstrated the allies' readiness to sternly respond to North Korean provocations and the U.S. commitment to defend its ally with the full range of its military capabilities, including nuclear.

After their annual meeting Thursday in Washington, U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and South Korean Defense Minister Lee Jong-Sup issued a joint statement strongly condemning the North's recent launches and carrying Austin's warning that any nuclear attacks against the United States or its allies and

partners “is unacceptable and will result in the end of the Kim regime.” South Korea’s military has previously warned the North that using its nuclear weapons would put it on a “path of self-destruction.”

Both defense chiefs also agreed on the need to enhance combined exercises and training events to strengthen readiness against North Korean nuclear and missile threats.

Even before the “Vigilant Storm” drills, North Korea test-launched a slew of missiles in what it called simulated nuclear attacks on U.S. and South Korean targets in protests of its rivals’ other sets of military exercises that involved a U.S. aircraft for the first time in five years. In September, North Korea also adopted a new law authorizing the preemptive use of its nuclear weapons in a broad range of situations.

South Korean and U.S. officials have steadfastly maintained their drills are defensive in nature and that they have no intentions of invading the North.

U.S. and South Korean militaries have been expanding their regular military drills since the May inauguration of conservative South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol, who has promised to take a tougher stance on North Korean provocations. Some of the allies’ drills had been previously downsized or canceled to support now-stalled diplomacy on North Korea’s nuclear program or to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/04 Hanford’s nuclear past is a tourist attraction
SOURCE	https://crosscut.com/environment/2022/11/hanford-turns-its-nuclear-past-tourist-destination
GIST	<p>The control room has a 1940s sci-fi vibe. More than 2,000 tiny lights cover the right wall, with a sign on top that says “Caution: Bumping Panel May Cause Reactor To Scram.”</p> <p>Each of the lights used to be connected to horizontal uranium fuel rods at Hanford’s B Reactor. A good bump could knock one of 2,004 circuits loose and trigger 27 vertical control rods to drop and shut down the reactor — a “scram.”</p> <p>Built in 1943 and 1944 and shut down since 1968, the Manhattan Project B Reactor is now a tourist attraction in Eastern Washington on the site where plutonium was processed for the atomic bombs exploded in 1945 at the Trinity site in New Mexico and at Nagasaki, sparking the end of World War II.</p> <p>The U.S. Department of Energy and the National Parks Service offer public tours of the world’s first industrial-sized nuclear reactor, beginning with a 25-mile bus ride from northwest Richland into the nuclear site.</p> <p>The B Reactor is actually one of three tourist attractions associated with the Hanford site. The second, the LIGO Exploration Center, opened in September and invites science enthusiasts of all ages to dive into astrophysics. And the National Park Service covers the history of the Manhattan Project and Hanford at a visitors’ center in Richland.</p> <p>On a recent Wednesday, 46 people from as far away as New England toured the B Reactor. “It’s an amazing site. We’re glad we came,” said Ravi Joshi of Dartmouth, Massachusetts. He and his wife, Laura, were visiting Richland to see their daughter Leena, a Hanford health physics technician.</p> <p>The B Reactor attracted roughly 3,000 visitors when it opened for public tours in 2009. Tourists numbered 14,537 in 2019 before the reactor was closed during the pandemic. Tours slowly ramped back up this year to tally 4,551 visitors by mid-October.</p> <p>“This little place in southeast Washington changed history and started the Atomic Age. ... It did what it was supposed to do and did it against all odds,” said Colleen French, the U.S. Department of Energy official who guided the B Reactor to become a national park.</p>

Free daily tours begin at 8:30 a.m. at the national park's headquarters in the middle of a mini-strip mall in northwestern Richland, located along two-lane State Route 240 stretching into the Hanford nuclear reservation. The required bus ride takes visitors 45 minutes through the quasi-desert to the B Reactor.

During the trip, tour guide Terry Andre talked about creating the B Reactor; Albert Einstein warning FDR about nuclear fission; American fears about Germany developing an atomic bomb first; and why Hanford and the B Reactor were built where they are in Eastern Washington.

The U.S. government chose the location — three Eastern Washington farm villages, Hanford, Richland and White Bluffs — because they were isolated and next to the Columbia River to provide needed water for the reactor. The story includes a lot of drama, including the reality that local people had to be displaced to make room for a secret plutonium factory, which had never been attempted before.

DuPont de Nemours Inc. agreed to design and build the B Reactor to create plutonium from uranium fuel rods, plus a battleship-sized indoor chemical plant — T Plant — to extract the plutonium sprinkles from the irradiated fuel rods.

The cost to the feds: \$1.

That was because DuPont picked up a nickname that it hated for making massive amounts of money providing munitions in World War I. "It would be a great name for a punk-rock band, but not for a business: 'The Merchants of Death,'" Andre said. DuPont insisted on the \$1 fee to show its non-exploitative patriotic involvement in World War II.

More than 100,000 people were hired to work at the site, but a huge percentage soon left. Hanford was in the middle of nowhere, with no development for 50 to 70 miles in any direction. The climate is really hot or really cold, punctuated by dust storms. The government provided primitive, barrack-style living conditions. Only a handful at the top knew the big picture; most of the workers did not know plutonium was being created.

Andre also told the bus riders about Leona Woods, an Illinois farm girl who earned a Ph.D. in physics in 1942 at age 23, becoming the only woman and youngest physicist in the Manhattan Project. She overcame sexism to work on the first small experimental plutonium-making reactor in Chicago with her mentor Enrico Fermi. Woods moved to Hanford to help develop the B Reactor in 1943. She got married, got pregnant and hid her pregnancy beneath baggy work clothes so she wasn't banned from the reactor. And Woods was one of the few who knew the project's big picture.

Just short of reaching the Columbia River, the tour bus turned right off State Route 240. A weather-beaten gate opened, and then about a minute later visitors could see the B Reactor building, a tall gray concrete cube with a smokestack. A railroad track with a defunct-looking locomotive sits next to it among the scrubby desert dirt and dust.

Visitors enter the building into a cavernous chamber. At one end looms the B Reactor's core: 36 feet tall, stretching across 28 feet of floor, with 2,004 horizontal tubes with their ends facing the tourists. "I didn't think it would be as big as it was. It was cool," said Jessica Barker of Elkins, North Carolina.

The reactor core gives off a steampunk ambience, Jules Verne on steroids.

Standing in front of the core, a second tour guide, Rick Bond, explained how the reactor core worked. When bombarded with neutrons, the uranium 238 isotopes within the 2,004 fuel rods created uranium 239 isotopes, which then became neptunium 239, which then became specks of plutonium 239 within the fuel rods.

A sense of urgency flooded World War II-era Hanford.

“Germany was working on a bomb. We had to beat them to the punch,” Bond said. It was not until after the war that the Allies learned that the Germans were still blundering around with their initial experiments when they surrendered in 1945.

After looking at the reactor core, tourists checked out several outlying rooms, including the main control room.

Camped out in the control room, Andre returned to Leona Woods’ story and the tensest day in B Reactor’s history — Sept. 26, 1944.

That day, the reactor cranked up to using roughly 1,500 fuel rods, then sputtered down, then up and then down again. Andre mimicked Woods’ cultured voice in an oral-history recording: “It was dead. It just went dead.”

Fermi, Woods and others whipped out their slide rules and pondered and calculated. They quickly figured out that the nuclear reactions created an isotope called xenon 135, which captured neutrons intended to go elsewhere during the process. “Think of the Cookie Monster ... It was the Cookie Monster of neutrons,” Andre said.

They figured out that more fuel rods than 1,500 would be needed to fix the problem. Luckily, DuPont had made room for 2,004 fuel rods as a hedge against possible miscalculations. The xenon problem was quickly fixed.

By mid-1945, Hanford had processed enough plutonium for a handful of atomic bombs. “It’s mind-boggling how they did it that fast,” said tourist Bernie Charvet of Grandview, Washington. Since the Hanford assignment was completed ahead of schedule, the feds paid DuPont only 68 cents. A Pasco Kiwanis club contributed 32 pennies to ensure DuPont received its full dollar.

Hanford’s plutonium was used inside the first atomic blast at the Trinity site in New Mexico on July 16, 1945. While Hanford produced plutonium, a parallel effort in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, created uranium to use in a bullet-like bomb that destroyed Hiroshima on Aug. 6, 1945, killing 70,000 to 80,000 people. A B-29 bomber dropped a plutonium bomb on Nagasaki on Aug. 9, killing between 39,000 and 80,000 people. World War II ended less than a week later.

Richland embraced its role in ending World War II. The local high school sports teams became the “Bombers,” with joint logos of a mushroom cloud or a B-17 bomber. Local histories are hazy on which logo came first. During World War II, Hanford’s workers all contributed one day’s pay to build a B-17.

Eventually, nine plutonium-production reactors and several plutonium processing plants were built at Hanford during the Cold War to build up the United States’ nuclear arsenal. The chemical and radioactive wastes from those processes were either dumped directly into the ground or into 177 underground tanks, leading Hanford to become the most contaminated chunk of land in the Western Hemisphere.

The Tri-Cities’ pride in birthing the Atomic Age led to Democratic U.S. Sen. Maria Cantwell and former Republican U.S. Rep. Richard “Doc” Hastings asking Congress in 2004 to make the B Reactor, T Plant and remnants of the displaced farm villages into a national park. Oak Ridge and Los Alamos, New Mexico — where the bombs were assembled — also wanted national park designations.

At first, only Los Alamos received that honor. But the communities banded together to ensure all three did. It took until 2014 for congressional members to shepherd the joint designations and the money to fund the sites. The deaths and devastation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki spurred opposition to the idea in Congress.

French said the focus of the B Reactor national park site is on science and engineering, but Nagasaki’s devastation and the 1942 displacement of local residents might be addressed in the future.

HEADLINE	11/06 More employers 'ghosting' applicants
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/business/2022/nov/06/ghosting-jobs-employers-labor-market-corporate-culture
GIST	<p>We knew it was coming. The practice of “ghosting” has taken a 180-degree turn. Up until recently, many job candidates in this very tight labor market thought nothing of accepting interviews – even job offers – and then ghosting the company that recruited them by simply not showing up. Now, new data from jobs platform Glassdoor finds that a growing number of employers are doing the same.</p> <p>According to Glassdoor’s chief economist, job seekers have increasingly reported being ghosted by employers since the pandemic began. “The share of interview reviews mentioning ghosting has almost doubled (+98%) since Feb ’20,” he wrote in a Twitter post. “In January 2019, roughly 1.25% of interview reviews mentioned ghosting and that percentage has increased over the past two and half years to more than twice that amount.”</p> <p>None of this should come as a big surprise. The economy is clearly facing headwinds.</p> <p>The tech industry has already lost tens of thousands of jobs with companies like Microsoft and Salesforce recently announcing layoffs, which followed similar moves by big names like Netflix, TikTok, Cameo, Shopify and Lyft. The big firms in real estate, such as Compass and Redfin, have shed thousands of workers thanks to the tanking housing market.</p> <p>Many firms in the financial services and mortgage industries are laying off workers, and big investment banks like Goldman Sachs and JPMorgan Chase are heading in the same direction. The healthcare industry is retracting, and the retail industry is bracing for a slower holiday season – already Walmart and Amazon have dropped or frozen their holiday hiring plans. Big brands like Gap, Peloton, Wayfair and 7-Eleven have cut thousands of jobs in the past few months. And that’s not even including the countless companies that are eliminating jobs with technologies.</p> <p>The tide is clearly turning and employers of all sizes can be pickier about the people they hire. So, just like all those candidates who ghosted them, now the employers are doing the ghosting. Awful, right? But maybe it’s a good thing.</p> <p>Regardless of who’s doing it, “ghosting” is a despicable, selfish, irresponsible and unprofessional practice. And the practice tells more about a person – and an organization – than any number of interviews, job references, and employment skills and screening tests. To agree to accept or extend a job offer, or an even an interview, and then just disappear without a word is probably one of the most lily-livered, unprofessional things a company or person can do in a professional environment.</p> <p>Who would want to hire someone who behaves like this? If that person can’t be a grown-up and tell a recruiter face to face about their change in plans, then how can they handle similar situations with customers and suppliers, where plans and promises are always fluctuating?</p> <p>And what about the company that behaves this way? Is this living up to their so-called “mission statement”? Do you believe they are “making the world a better place”, “creating value” or “building a sustainable future” like they say in their corporate propaganda? If an organization treats its candidates in such a manner, how does it treat its employees? Its shareholders? Its customers? How transparent would this company be in times of financial stress? What other corners are being cut in its products and products?</p> <p>Forget about those AI-based video platforms, talent acquisition tools and workflow-generated recruiting software. Employers can read all the résumés and talk to all the references they want. Job candidates can read all the corporate news and reviews about the company. None of this holds a candle to whether or not a person or company ghosted. Ghosting says it all.</p> <p>This is why I appreciate the tweet from Glassdoor’s economist. But it’s not enough. I would like to see his company – and his competitors like Monster and Indeed – provide both their corporate subscribers and job</p>

	<p>candidates with more detailed data about each other's ghosting activities. I can think of no better information for a candidate or an employer to use when making a hiring decision.</p> <p>As an employer I find it difficult to hire people based on just their résumés, an awkward interview and a couple of canned references. To me, it's always no more than an educated guess as to how that person will perform and what kind of a human being they are. If a candidate ghosts me, I don't get angry. I'm grateful. That candidate has done me a favor. And if my corporate values are such that I don't find it a problem to ghost a job candidate then I'm doing that person a favor too.</p>
	Return to Top

HEADLINE	11/06 Day 256 of the Russia invasion
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/nov/06/russia-ukraine-war-at-a-glance-what-we-know-on-day-256-of-the-invasion
GIST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Russian troops have been looting Kherson ahead of a potential withdrawal from the south-eastern Ukrainian city. Items taken range from art and cultural exhibits to ambulances and tractors. • There has been an assassination attempt on a judge who sentenced two Britons to death in Russian-controlled Ukraine. Alexander Nikulin, who said Aiden Aslin and Shaun Pinner should be shot by a firing squad, was shot in Vuhlehirsk, in Donetsk, on Friday night. The local supreme court justice is in a serious condition in hospital. • Russian troops are allegedly searching for residents in the Kherson region who are refusing to evacuate, before the forces' potential withdrawal from the west bank of the Dnieper River. • The Ukrainian foreign ministry has claimed its forces killed another 600 Russian soldiers in the past 24 hours. • Iran's foreign minister, Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, has said the country did supply Russia with drones but that it took place before President Vladimir Putin's forces invaded Kyiv. The drones have been used in attacks on civilian infrastructure, notably targeting power stations and dams. • President Volodymyr Zelenskiy dismissed talk of limited Iranian supplies to Russia, saying Kyiv had downed 11 drones on Friday alone. He said: "If Iran continues to lie about the obvious, it means the world will make even more efforts to investigate the terrorist cooperation between the Russian and Iranian regimes and what Russia pays Iran for such cooperation." Ukraine's foreign ministry spokesperson, Oleg Nikolenko, said Iran "should realise that the consequences of complicity in the crimes of Russian aggression against Ukraine will be much larger than the benefits of Russia's support". • External power has been restored to Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant two days after it was disconnected from the power grid after Russian shelling damaged high voltage lines, the UN nuclear watchdog said. • Nato's secretary general, Jens Stoltenberg, has said he does not believe Russia will use a nuclear weapon in Ukraine. • The 300,000 troops Putin conscripted as part of the mobilisation drive are providing "little additional offensive combat capability" as the Russian military is struggling to train them, UK's Ministry of Defence has reported. • Scheduled power cuts will take place on Sunday in seven Ukrainian provinces including major cities such as Kyiv. Other provinces affected are Kharkiv, Chernihiv, Cherkasy, Zhytomyr, Sumy and Poltava. About 500 power generators have been sent to Ukraine by 17 EU countries to help with the energy problems caused by Russian attacks. • At least 112,000 Russians have emigrated to Georgia this year, border crossing statistics show. Reuters reported that the first large wave of 43,000 arrived after Russia invaded Ukraine on 24 February and the second wave came after Putin announced a nationwide mobilisation drive in late September.
	Return to Top

HEADLINE	11/06 Deadliest year for US-Mexico border
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2022/nov/06/us-mexico-border-body-bags-pile-up

Along the US-Mexico border, overwhelmed mortuaries in Eagle Pass, Texas have been forced to stockpile a “backlog of bodies” in a city-owned refrigerated truck.

The local government bought but never used the makeshift morgue amid the Covid-19 pandemic, when such desperate sights were [not unheard of](#) in [various parts](#) of the US, [including Texas](#).

Yet in recent weeks, the truck has come to embody a renewed abundance of death in the border town with a population of [roughly 29,000](#), deployed as a stark stopgap measure to keep bodies preserved before they can go to an overworked medical examiner, Eagle Pass fire chief Manuel Mello III told the Guardian.

Mello recently counted nine overflow corpses languishing inside the refrigerated truck, a tally that was on the rise.

“They’re all migrants,” he said solemnly.

Along the 2,000-mile (3,219km) boundary between the US and Mexico, the 2022 fiscal year proved the deadliest on record for people trying to make unauthorized crossings of this heavily-patrolled international line.

In just 12 months, [more than 800](#) migrants lost their lives in search of a better one as they disappeared beneath the tumultuous waters of the Rio Grande, succumbed to [blistering summer](#) heat, crashed [in a smuggler's vehicle](#), [tumbled from a border barrier](#), or otherwise had their travels violently cut short.

In Eagle Pass’s regional enforcement sector alone, Border Patrol agents discovered [more than 200 dead migrants](#) between October 2021 and the end of July, compared to an already heartbreaking [34 bodies](#) during the entire 2020 fiscal year.

Ahead of this week’s crucial [midterm elections](#), Republicans have manipulated these harrowing statistics as yet another opportunity to make much ado about what various rightwing players call US president Joe Biden’s “[open border policies](#)”, accusing the administration of incompetence that is causing “[body bags](#) [to] keep piling up”.

But while those deceptively simple talking points have proven persuasive among American voters – [a plurality of whom say](#) Republicans are better suited than Democrats to address immigration – they mask a far starker reality.

For large swathes of forcibly displaced people fleeing unlivable poverty, persecution, hunger, climate change and bloodshed in places ranging from Haiti to Venezuela to Honduras, the US-Mexico border is [not open at all](#).

It’s close to sealed by a hostile combination of pandemic-era public health measures cynically retooled as federal immigration control and mass policing by state troops who arrest, jail and criminalize migrants. Cruelly, these hardline deterrence mechanisms advanced by both Democrats and Republicans [have likely only made](#) the US’s south-west border bloodier.

Current US policy [is predicated on a false assumption](#) that if only the consequences for crossing the southwest border [are severe enough](#), people will stop trying.

For decades, presidential administrations with disparate political views have [unified under the paradigm](#) of [prevention through deterrence](#), erecting physical and legal obstacles to discourage people from crossing.

Deterrence as a strategy has informed some of the US’s most controversial immigration policies, from separating families, to detaining children, to stranding asylum seekers in dangerous Mexican border towns.

But desperate people still find ways to make it onto US soil: last fiscal year, Customs and Border Protection documented nearly [2.38m enforcement encounters](#) at the southern border, a record high causing headaches for Joe Biden as conservatives accuse the president of being “lax” [on border crime](#).

The truth is more complex, and not at all lax. More than a million of last fiscal year’s border enforcement encounters were processed under [Title 42](#), now invoked as [a federal immigration enforcement tool](#) but originally disguised as a public health measure amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

The policy allowed the Trump and now the Biden administrations to expel huge numbers of people from the US without even letting them ask for asylum, seemingly in violation of domestic and international law.

Far from ending unauthorized migration, the invocation of Title 42 has in fact dramatically inflated the number of encounters at the US-Mexico border, [as people who are expelled feel compelled to cross again](#) – and again, and again. Sometimes, relentless migrants have been so determined to complete their journeys that they’ve risked life and limb [dozens of times](#), fueling a political and humanitarian disaster.

Yet even though these expulsions have proved ill-advised both optically and ethically, Biden has [now expanded the use](#) of Title 42 by adding Venezuelans to the list of nationalities targeted for return to Mexico, an apparent [betrayal of his campaign promises](#) to uphold [the legal right to seek asylum](#) and a paradox as his administration ostensibly [fights to sunset the practice in court](#).

Beyond these mixed messages, the Biden administration has repeatedly acknowledged that [the US immigration system is broken](#). Luckily, actual solutions abound, including innovative federal legislation creating genuine pathways for people to migrate legally. For one, the agricultural sector is [begging Congress to pass the Farm Workforce Modernization Act](#) and shore up much-needed immigrant labor, as food insecurity and national security concerns raise alarms amid a dwindling domestic food supply and surging food costs.

For another, the House [has already advanced](#) the [American Dream and Promise Act](#), which would create a pathway to citizenship for [so-called Dreamers](#), who were brought to the US unlawfully as children, and forcibly displaced people with temporary protected status ([TPS](#)), two demographics who have been stuck in a precarious legal limbo, sometimes for decades, despite significant contributions to the nation.

Even effective humanitarian policies are not that difficult to devise and implement; the Biden White House already did so when it admitted over 100,000 Ukrainians [in just about five months](#) amid the ongoing war to resist Russia’s invasion.

But when the administration announced [a similar parole program](#) for Venezuelans last month, [modeled after Uniting for Ukraine](#), it initially allotted a meager 24,000 spots. That’s a drop in the bucket compared to the [7.1 million Venezuelan refugees and migrants worldwide](#), many in our own backyard.

So despite having solutions so close at hand, a lack of will jams up legislative reform via Congress.

Republicans who publicly tout bipartisanship don’t engage on immigration reform, claiming “it’s not possible to do it while the border crisis is raging”.

“What the Biden administration ought to do is focus on regaining control of the border, fixing our broken asylum system,” US senator for Texas John Cornyn [told Roll Call](#). “And then I think we can have that conversation.”

So goes the vicious cycle: Republicans avoid solutions, which exacerbates the situation, then they shout about inaction and it buys them votes and [headlines in the New York Times](#) like “Democrats twist and turn on immigration as Republicans attack in waves”.

Some Democrats appease their loudest detractors amid election vulnerability.

	<p>And both parties continue to police people seeking security and opportunity over violence, persecution and poverty as if they're national security threats.</p> <p>In the shadow of it all, the corpses amass.</p> <p>Back in Eagle Pass, locals like Rosalinda Medrano who have lived for decades along a porous border understand that migrants have and will always come or, increasingly, die trying.</p> <p>"Even though there's one fence, and another fence, and so many troopers, and the National Guard, and you name it – Border Patrol, here and there and everywhere – it's not gonna stop these families," she said, adding simply: "They want a better life."</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	11/06 Iran protests in universities, Kurdish region
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/nov/06/iran-fresh-protests-universities-kurdish-region
GIST	<p>New protests erupted in Iran on Sunday at universities and in the largely Kurdish northwest, keeping a seven-week anti-regime movement going even in the face of a fierce crackdown.</p> <p>The protests, triggered in mid-September by the death of Mahsa Amini after she was arrested for allegedly breaching strict dress rules for women, have evolved into the biggest challenge for the clerical leadership since the 1979 revolution.</p> <p>Unlike demonstrations in November 2019, they have been nationwide, spread across social classes, universities, the streets and even schools, showing no sign of letting up even as the death toll ticks towards 200, according to one rights group.</p> <p>Another rights group, Norway-based Hengaw, said security forces opened fire on Sunday at a protest in Marivan, a town in Kurdistan province, wounding 35 people. It was not immediately possible to verify the toll.</p> <p>The latest protest was sparked by the death in Tehran of a Kurdish student from Marivan, Nasrin Ghadri, who according to Hengaw died on Saturday after being beaten over the head by police. Iranian authorities have not yet commented on the cause of her death.</p> <p>Hengaw said she was buried at dawn without a funeral ceremony on the insistence of the authorities who feared the event could become a protest flashpoint. Authorities subsequently sent reinforcements to the area, it added.</p> <p>Kurdish-populated regions have been the crucible of protests since the death of Amini, herself a Kurd from the town of Saez in Kurdistan province.</p> <p>Universities have also emerged as major protest hotbeds. Iran Human Rights (IHR), a Norway-based organisation, said students at Sharif University in Tehran were staging sit-ins on Sunday in support of arrested colleagues.</p> <p>Students at the university in Babol in northern Iran meanwhile removed gender segregation barriers that by law were erected in their cafeteria, it added.</p> <p>The protests have been sustained by myriad different tactics, with observers noting a relatively new trend of young people tipping off clerics' turbans in the streets.</p> <p>IHR said on Saturday that at least 186 people have been killed in the crackdown on the Mahsa Amini protests, up by 10 from Wednesday.</p>

It said another 118 people had lost their lives in [distinct protests since 30 September in Sistan-Baluchistan](#), a mainly Sunni Muslim province in the south-east, presenting a further major headache for the regime.

IHR said security forces killed at least 16 people with live bullets when protests erupted after prayers on Friday in the town of Khash in Sistan-Baluchistan.

Amnesty International meanwhile said up to 10 people were feared dead in Friday's violence in Khash, accusing security forces of firing at demonstrators from rooftops.

"Iranians continue taking to the streets and are more determined than ever to bring fundamental changes," said IHR director Mahmood Amiry-Moghaddam. "The response from the Islamic Republic is more violence."

The protest crackdown has also for now consigned efforts to revive the 2015 deal over Iran's nuclear programme to the back burner and intensified focus on Tehran's ties with Russia – notably its supply to Moscow of drones used in the Ukraine war.

The protests were fanned by fury over the restrictive dress rules for women, over which Amini had been arrested. But they have now become a broad movement against the theocracy that has ruled Iran since the fall of the shah.

Meanwhile Sunnis in Sistan-Baluchistan – where the alleged rape of a girl in police custody was the spark for protests – have long felt discriminated against by the nation's Shia leadership.

IHR also warned that "dozens" of arrested protesters had been charged with purported crimes which could see them sentenced to death – up from only a handful earlier reported to be potentially facing that fate.

As well as thousands of ordinary citizens, the crackdown has seen the arrests of prominent activists, journalists and artists such as the influential rapper Toomaj Salehi.

There is also growing concern about the wellbeing of Wall Street Journal contributor and freedom of expression campaigner Hossein Ronaghi, who was arrested in September and whose family says is on hunger strike in Evin prison.

In a new blow, his father, Ahmad, is now in intensive care after suffering a heart attack while conducting a vigil outside Evin, Hossein Ronaghi's brother Hassan wrote on Twitter.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/06 Kyiv preps for winter: no heat, water, power
SOURCE	https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/nov/6/kyiv-prepares-for-winter-with-no-heat-water-or-pow/
GIST	<p>KYIV, Ukraine — The mayor of Kyiv, Ukraine's capital, is warning residents that they must prepare for the worst this winter if Russia keeps striking the country's energy infrastructure - and that means having no electricity, water or heat in the freezing cold cannot be ruled out.</p> <p>"We are doing everything to avoid this. But let's be frank, our enemies are doing everything for the city to be without heat, without electricity, without water supply, in general, so we all die. And the future of the country and the future of each of us depends on how prepared we are for different situations," Mayor Vitali Klitschko told state media.</p> <p>Russia has focused on striking Ukraine's energy infrastructure over the last month, causing power shortages and rolling outages across the country. Kyiv was scheduled to have hourly rotating blackouts Sunday in parts of the city and the surrounding region.</p> <p>Rolling blackouts also were planned in the nearby Chernihiv, Cherkasy, Zhytomyr, Sumy, Kharkiv and Poltava regions, Ukraine's state-owned energy operator, Ukrenergo, said.</p>

Kyiv plans to deploy about a 1,000 heating points, but noted that this may not be enough for a city of 3 million people.

As Russia intensifies its attacks on the capital, Ukrainian forces are pushing forward in the south. Residents of Ukraine's Russian-occupied city of Kherson received warning messages on their phones urging them to evacuate as soon as possible, Ukraine's military said Sunday. Russian soldiers warned civilians that Ukraine's army was preparing for a massive attack and told people to leave for the city's right bank immediately.

Russian forces are preparing for a Ukrainian counteroffensive to seize back the southern city of Kherson, which was captured during the early days of the invasion. In September, Russia illegally annexed Kherson as well as three other regions of Ukraine and subsequently declared martial law in the four provinces.

The Kremlin-installed administration in Kherson already has moved tens of thousands of civilians out of the city.

Russia has been "occupying and evacuating" Kherson simultaneously, trying to convince Ukrainians that they're leaving when in fact they're digging in, Nataliya Humenyuk, a spokeswoman for Ukraine's Southern Forces, told state television.

"There are defense units that have dug in there quite powerfully, a certain amount of equipment has been left, firing positions have been set up," she said.

Russian forces are also digging in in a fiercely contested region in the east, worsening the already tough conditions for residents and the defending Ukrainian army following Moscow's illegal annexation and declaration of martial law in Donetsk province.

The attacks have almost completely destroyed the power plants that serve the city of Bakhmut and the nearby town of Soledar, said Pavlo Kyrylenko, the region's Ukrainian governor, said. Shelling killed one civilian and wounded three, he reported late Saturday.

"The destruction is daily, if not hourly," Kyrylenko told state television.

Moscow-backed separatists have controlled part of Donetsk for nearly eight years before Russia invaded Ukraine in late February. Protecting the separatists' self-proclaimed republic there was one of Russian President Vladimir Putin's justifications for the invasion, and his troops have spent months trying to capture the entire province.

While Russia's "greatest brutality" was focused in the Donetsk region, "constant fighting" continued elsewhere along the front line that stretches more than 1,000 kilometers (620 miles), Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in his nightly video address.

Between Saturday and Sunday, Russia's launched four missiles and 19 airstrikes hitting more than 35 villages in nine regions, from Chernihiv and Kharkiv in the northeast to Kherson and Mykolaiv in the south, according to the president's office. The strikes killed two people and wounded six, the office said.

In the Donetsk city of Bakhmut, 15,000 remaining residents were living under daily shelling and without water or power, according to local media. The city has been under attack for months, but the bombardment picked up after Russian forces experienced setbacks during Ukrainian counteroffensives in the Kharkiv and Kherson regions.

The front line is now on Bakhmut's outskirts, where mercenaries from the Wagner Group, a shadowy Russian military company, are reported to be leading the charge.

	<p>Yevgeny Prigozhin, founder of the group who has typically remained under the radar, is taking a more visible role in the war. In a statement Sunday he announced the funding and creation of “militia training centers” in Russia’s Belgorod and Kursk regions in the southwest, saying that locals were best placed to “fight against sabotage” on Russian soil. The training centers are in addition to a military technology center the group said it was opening in St. Petersburg.</p> <p>In Kharkiv, officials were working to identify bodies found in mass graves after the Russians withdrew, Dmytro Chubenko, a spokesperson for the regional prosecutor’s office, told local media.</p> <p>DNA samples have been collected from 450 bodies discovered in a mass grave in the city of Izium, but the samples need to be matched with relatives and so far only 80 people have participated, he said.</p> <p>In one sliver of good news, the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant was reconnected to Ukraine’s power grid, local media reported Sunday. Europe’s largest nuclear plant needs electricity to maintain vital cooling systems, but it had been running on emergency diesel generators since Russian shelling severed its outside connections.</p>
	Return to Top

HEADLINE	11/06 DHS paid 5-star hotel service for migrants
SOURCE	https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/nov/6/feds-paid-room-service-laundry-and-babysitters-ill/
GIST	<p>Homeland Security not only put illegal immigrant families up in hotels at taxpayer expense but the contract it signed insisted they be given five-star treatment with laundry service, their choice of mattresses and guards — not to keep them in, but to keep others out.</p> <p>Some of those contracting details were revealed by America First Legal, a conservative outfit run by former top Trump aides, which obtained documents through an open-records request and called some of the accommodations for illegal immigrants “astounding.”</p> <p>Immigrants were given the option of meat at every meal, 24-hour access to drinks and snacks, babysitters to watch their children, television with programming in English and Spanish and a choice of mattresses for their beds.</p> <p>The hotels were part of the Biden administration’s response to the unprecedented surge of illegal immigrants that swamped Homeland Security’s resources in early 2021.</p> <p>The department used the hotels to house migrant families it was still trying to process.</p> <p>Family Endeavors Inc. won no-bid contracts worth hundreds of millions of dollars from ICE and Health and Human Services despite not having any experience with that size contract.</p> <p>The awards came after the firm hired Andrew Lorenzen-Strait, who had previously served as a senior ICE official overseeing treatment and then worked as a member of the incoming Biden administration’s transition team after the 2020 election.</p> <p>“We thought that it was important to make this information public so that the average citizen can see what the government is up to,” said Reed D. Rubinstein, senior counselor and director of investigations at American First Legal. “That’s where this contract is really helpful because it gives you a window — a small window, but a window nonetheless — into how the Biden administration is conducting itself.”</p> <p>Hotels were used in El Paso, Pecos and Cotulla, Texas, and Chandler and Phoenix in Arizona.</p> <p>Among the things Family Endeavors promised ICE in the contract was that it would never refer to the illegal immigrants it was detaining as “detainees” or “aliens” — even though they were, legally, both of those. The contracting document even uses those legal terms repeatedly to refer to the immigrants.</p>

The Times reached out to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement for comment for this story.

AFL said the illegal immigrants seemed to get more consideration than Americans, including veterans. The organization pointed out that Texas and Arizona, where the hotels were commandeered, have nearly 40,000 homeless residents — including 3,000 veterans.

AFL obtained more than 150 pages of documents from an open-records request, though it took more than a year for ICE to produce them.

The hotels reported in the documents were two Best Westerns, one Comfort Suites, one Wood Springs Suites, one Holiday Inn Express, one MicroHotel and one Hampton Inn.

Key details were redacted, including the prices paid for specific services. Indeed, even the room rate for the hotels is blocked out in the documents, with officials calling that sensitive proprietary information.

What did emerge from the contract were efforts to ensure illegal immigrants were made comfortable, had “unfettered” access to lawyers, and were not disturbed by the general public.

The document specifically told Family Endeavors it had no obligation to prevent the illegal immigrants from leaving the hotels — though it could try to impose unspecified “consequences” on those that did leave.

“Service provider shall provide security to ensure resident safety; but said security primary function[sic] is to ensure no unauthorized individuals enter the residential facility,” the contract said.

The contract said migrants must be provided with at least a 4-inch thick mattress, but if that wasn’t to their liking they could request to double up with at least two 3-inch pads.

Meat-based courses had to be part of all three daily meals, with Kosher, Halal and vegetarian meals also available — and all of it delivered as room service.

The documents said migrants were to be instructed on the proper use of trash cans and “proper use of toilet tissue.”

That is likely due to problems ICE encountered over the last decade as the demographics of the illegal immigrant population shifted, and newcomers were unfamiliar with U.S. plumbing’s ability to handle toilet paper. ICE detention facilities reported soiled paper being strewn about cells as migrants sought in vain for trash cans or other means to dispose of the refuse.

Migrants were also to be instructed in the proper use of toothbrushes.

Mandatory roll call was also banned. Instead, service employees were told to check in with the illegal immigrants a few times a day “in a manner approved by ICE.”

The hotels also provided a “suggestion box” to receive complaints.

Mr. Rubinstein said that while decent treatment of migrants is a given, the Biden administration’s approach is part of the reason it’s faced record border chaos.

“You can rest assured that tales of free television and so forth are making their way back to other countries and helping to stimulate immigration,” Mr. Rubinstein said.

ICE ended the hotel program early this year. In court documents, the agency said it had improved its catch-and-release program at the border enough that the hotel space is no longer needed.

But while the hotels were in operation, advocates for the illegal immigrant children complained that they couldn't be sure all proper detention standards were being met.

They also told a federal judge they were worried the migrants would languish at the hotels, rather than be released quickly under the terms of a legal settlement governing the treatment of illegal immigrant children.

The contract details track with other ICE agreements on how to handle illegal immigrant children and families.

The Washington Times has previously reported on the conditions at shelters for unaccompanied immigrant children, run by Health and Human Services, and for detention facilities for families, run by ICE.

The HHS shelters piped music deemed "sensitive to culture and preference" into the rooms of the children, while dietitians scrutinized the menus each day to make sure they included whole grains but not whole milk. Doctors and dentists treated the children, often delivering the first medical care of their lives.

Shelters also organized field trips for the kids.

ICE family facilities had soccer fields and volleyball courts, classrooms for kids, a computer lab and extensive cable television access.

The Obama administration expanded use of the family facilities, with officials at the time saying they helped solve the first family migrant surge.

The Trump administration also used the facilities, but the Biden administration, bowing to pressure from immigrant-rights activists, has emptied the facilities of families and instead released them as quickly as possible.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/05 Manhattan high-rise fire injures 38
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/05/nyregion/manhattan-high-rise-fire.html
GIST	<p>Firefighters, using ropes and dangling off a high-rise in Midtown Manhattan, rescued a woman who was trapped in a fire that injured at least 38 people on Saturday, officials said.</p> <p>The fire at 429 East 52nd Street was caused by a lithium-ion battery in an electric bicycle, the authorities said. The unit where the fire started had at least five e-bikes, Chief Fire Marshal Daniel E. Flynn said.</p> <p>Officials said they believe that a resident of the apartment repaired bikes and were investigating whether unauthorized business activity had taken place.</p> <p>About 200 fires in New York City this year have been caused by lithium-ion batteries, resulting in six deaths, he said.</p> <p>These batteries are found in micro-mobility transportation devices such as electric bikes, scooters and hoverboards. The fires caused by the batteries are typically intense, and can quickly gain momentum with any combustible objects around them, officials said.</p> <p>A sign outside the apartment complex read, "No pedal or e-bikes allowed beyond this point." Fire officials said any device that used the powerful lithium-ion batteries could cause a risk, not only those in bicycles.</p> <p>In a dramatic moment caught on video and posted on social media, firefighters rescued a woman from a 20th-floor apartment where officials said the fire started. Firefighters pulled the woman through a shattered window on a floor below. One other person was rescued by rope from the unit.</p>

A deputy assistant chief, Frank Leeb, described the use of a rope rescue as “a last resort in the F.D.N.Y.”

Of those hurt, two were in critical condition, five were in serious condition and the rest had minor injuries, fire officials said.

They said they were still compiling information about the people injured, as well as the number of people who were displaced, who will receive help from the Red Cross.

Officials said lingering questions around whether there had been building safety issues — whether there was or should have been a fire alarm; whether doors were left open, feeding the fire; whether fire protection and planning at the building were adequate — would be part of their investigation.

Residents described a scene of confusion and uncertainty about what had happened.

Riley Jankowski, 23, said she smelled smoke and initially thought her apartment complex had turned the heat on.

It wasn't until she heard fire trucks, she said, that she opened her window blinds, saw smoke and realized the threat.

At about 10:30 a.m., she ran out of her apartment on the sixth floor and banged on her neighbors' doors, yelling, “Fire!”

“I run down the stairs, and as I'm running out on the courtyard, the window bursts and glass flies around as I'm on the phone with my mom screaming for my life,” she said.

Allie Gold and Grant Rosenberg, both 26, left their 10th-floor apartment when they smelled smoke and saw it billowing out of a window.

“The alarm didn't go off, but it seemed like everyone got the memo and started going out,” Mr. Rosenberg said.

Along with Samantha Wilker, 30, a friend who was visiting, and their dog, Norman, they went down the stairs as firefighters were coming in. Upon exiting the building, the three saw windows pop above them.

Residents who lived above the 20th floor, where the fire was, evacuated to the roof. The New York Police Department dispatched a helicopter, but no rescues were conducted with it.

Other residents fled to the street via stairs or elevator, but the fire officials said they may have been safer remaining in their units with doors closed because the structure of the building is not combustible.

The fire comes nearly a year after a conflagration in the Bronx killed 17 people after open apartment and stairwell doors allowed smoke to spread.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/06 Somalia govt. pushback famine declaration
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/06/world/africa/somalia-famine-hunger.html
GIST	<p>NAIROBI, Kenya — A severely malnourished child is admitted to a clinic in Somalia on average every minute of every day. With crops and animals decimated in the worst drought to blanket the nation in four decades, millions of Somalis stand on the brink of starvation in an unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe.</p> <p>Despite the crisis, the Somali government has for months been reluctant to declare that the country faces a famine, according to interviews with government officials, aid workers and analysts familiar with internal government discussions.</p>

Such an announcement, aid workers said, would allow far more aid to flow — as happened during a 2011 famine — and muster the attention of Western donors who are currently more focused on responding to the fallout from the war in Ukraine.

The government of President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, [which came to power in May](#), has resisted the designation for a variety of reasons. First and foremost, the fledgling government fears it would undermine the public good will it now enjoys and play into the hands of the terrorist group Al Shabab, just as the military has launched a large-scale offensive against the insurgents, who have plagued the country for decades and [are still launching devastating attacks](#).

The Somali government also worries that a famine declaration would spur an exodus of people from affected areas into major cities and towns, stretching already meager resources and fueling a rise in crime.

And they are concerned that a declaration of famine would deter investors and shift international aid money toward the emergency response — instead of long-term development money to fund health care, education and climate resilience programs.

The president [acknowledged the dilemma in September](#), saying, “The risk is very high to announce a famine.” Such a declaration, he said, “does not affect the famine victims only, but halts the development and changes the perspectives and everything.”

Over the past several weeks, frustrated aid workers have insisted the threshold for famine has already been reached in some areas and have pushed the government in several meetings to declare a famine to bring attention to the crisis.

The hunger emergency is affecting not only Somalia, which has a population of 16 million, but an estimated 37 million people in the Horn of Africa. One of the main drivers of the crisis is climate change, which is the focus of the [climate summit known as COP27](#), starting on Sunday in Egypt.

Aid workers in Somalia fear a repeat of what happened in 2011, when more than [half the nearly 260,000 people who died in the famine](#) did so before it was officially declared.

“The government is afraid of the F-word — famine, that is,” said an aid worker who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive matters. “But the situation is catastrophic and the longer they wait, the worse it gets.”

Abdirahman Abdishakur, the president’s envoy for drought response, acknowledged that aid agencies had been pushing the government to declare a famine but denied that the government was hesitant to do so. He said there was no concrete evidence the thresholds for such a crisis had been passed. He also said rich nations should honor their commitments to help poor nations like Somalia deal with the effects of the climate crisis.

“The issue is not paying charity or giving out to Somalia,” Mr. Abdishakur, who has been [touring Western capitals](#) to raise awareness of the situation, said in a phone interview. “It is also about justice.”

An expert group that [assesses famine conditions](#) has made a determination on Somalia but has not declared a famine.

A famine can be [designated](#) if 20 percent of households in an area face an extreme lack of food, if 30 percent of children there are suffering from acute malnutrition, and if two adults or four children out of every 10,000 are dying every day from starvation. While experts can classify a famine and humanitarian organizations can warn of it, the decision to eventually declare a famine lies with a country’s government and U.N. agencies.

By pushing back against a famine declaration, Somali officials aim to buy time, and hope that much-needed funding will ultimately materialize anyway, said Mohamed Husein Gaas, the director of the Raad Peace Research Institute in Mogadishu, the capital.

“But that is not a good policy,” Mr. Gaas said. “We need to move fast and save lives.”

Nimo Hassan, the director of the Somali Nongovernmental Organizations Consortium, said technical definitions of famine shouldn’t be an excuse for inaction.

“The situation is outpacing the resources, and you are trying to drip-feed somebody who needs to drink water quickly,” she added.

The last review of Somalia’s situation, published in September, projected that [famine would occur in two districts](#) in the southern Bay region between October and December, and that the severe drought conditions would persist into early next year.

In severely impacted areas in Somalia, famine could soon be declared. Experts with the United Nations have just finished collecting data on the drought situation and are currently analyzing it before publishing their results in mid-November — a move that could spur authorities to make a formal famine declaration.

Almost a million Somalis live in inaccessible areas — including under the authority of Al Shabab — and those who conducted the review estimated that conditions there [were similar to, if not worse](#) than, areas where data was collected.

The Shabab’s control of vast areas of southern Somalia [exacerbated the 2011 famine](#), and in late October, the United Nations implored the group [to allow aid agencies unfettered access](#) to help drought-stricken Somalis.

Aid agencies say that since September, when the United Nations said that famine was “at the door” in Somalia, international funding has increased, [particularly from the United States](#). But experts said that fund-raising efforts aren’t growing as fast as needed and that donors should have responded to last year’s early warnings to prevent large-scale deaths and displacement now.

“The question we should all be asking ourselves is about the extent of the loss of human life, not whether we are an inch short or an inch over some thresholds,” said Daniel Maxwell, a professor of food security at Tufts University and a member of Somalia’s Famine Review Committee. “The calls to respond now are as clear as they are ever going to be.”

Extreme weather events, some linked to climate change, have devastated Somalia in recent years, leading to [recurrent droughts](#), hunger, poverty and internal displacement. The country is set to face a historic fifth straight poor rainy season, limiting farmers’ abilities to raise livestock or grow crops.

Crop failures, supply disruptions from the pandemic and the effects of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine have [more than tripled](#) the cost of some staple foods in some areas. And because the drought has lasted longer and affected more people and areas than in 2011, experts also worry that [more people could die](#) over time.

Across Somalia, clinics and hospitals treating malnourished children are reporting double or triple the number of cases compared with last year, even as the price of the peanut-based paste used to fight malnutrition has increased by 23 percent, according to the U.N. children’s agency. More than half a million children are at risk of death, [the United Nations has warned](#), “a pending nightmare” unlike any seen this century.

As the drought tightens its grip on Somalia, the authorities have also [declared an all-out war on Al Shabab](#) with the backing of local clan militias. Some critics say that the authorities should have focused on saving lives first and that the latest offensive will only create more displacement.

	<p>But Mr. Abdishakur, the envoy, defended the government's military operation, saying Al Shabab were contributing to the suffering by blowing up wells and extorting and taxing civilians.</p> <p>For now, aid workers say they are racing against time so that more Somalis do not die on their watch as they did in 2011.</p> <p>"One child dying is far too many, let alone hundreds," Ms. Hassan, the Somali N.G.O. leader, said.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	11/04 Domestic airline travel is about to get Real
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/02/travel/domestic-flights-real-id-passport.html?action=click&module=card&pageType=theWeekenderLink
GIST	<p>It's a change nearly 20 years in the making: a post-Sept. 11 law requiring that U.S. travelers carry more than a standard driver's license to board a domestic flight. Now, after years of delays, it is finally kicking into gear.</p> <p>Beginning May 3, 2023, U.S. travelers flying within the United States will need to show Transportation Security Administration agents either a security-enhanced driver's license that's Real ID-compliant or another T.S.A.-approved form of identification like a passport. A state driver's license that does not contain the Real ID seal will no longer be accepted.</p> <p>What is Real ID, anyway?</p> <p>Real ID is a driver's license or identification card that bears a special seal, which signifies that the bearer of the card has been screened and approved according to a standard set by the federal government, rather than just by the state issuing the license.</p> <p>Why is this change taking place?</p> <p>In the wake of the Sept. 11 attacks, the U.S. government realized that nearly all of the hijackers who boarded commercial planes and crashed them into the World Trade Center in New York, the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., and a field in Shanksville, Penn., were carrying U.S. driver's licenses and state IDs, and most of those documents had been obtained fraudulently.</p> <p>In the years that followed, the federal government began an effort to tighten national standards for state-issued documentation, and in 2005, Congress passed the Real ID Act. The act sets minimum standards for driver's licenses and other types of identification cards. Once the law kicks into gear, any traveler who wishes to use a driver's license or state-issued ID at a T.S.A. checkpoint must make sure that it is Real ID-compliant.</p> <p>"The findings of the 9/11 Commission clearly identified gaps in security management of state-level procured identity cards and driver's licenses," said Frank Harrison, the North America regional security director for World Travel Protection, a risk management company. "The Real ID Act provides a national framework of screening and approval to ensure consistency and integrity of programs. In other words, each state will maintain authority over their ID issuances, but they collectively will adhere to one standard of practice."</p> <p>The Real ID Act was initially set to be enforced in 2008 and has been delayed a number of times. "It's remarkable how long it has taken for this to come into effect," said Scott Keyes, the founder of the travel platform Scott's Cheap Flights. "It's been decades in the making."</p> <p>How do I know if my license is a Real ID?</p> <p>The easiest way to tell is just to look at it. Real ID-compliant driver's licenses have a star, usually in gold or black. The stars look slightly different on each state's licenses — in California, it sits on top of an image of a bear, which is the state animal — but it's always located in the top right corner.</p>

A license that is not Real-ID compliant will not have a star in the corner, and some will also have the words “federal limits apply.”

Can I get a Real ID regardless of where I live?

Real ID-compliant licenses and identification cards are now being issued in all 50 states as well as the District of Columbia and the majority of U.S. territories. American Samoa is not yet issuing them.

What do I need to get a Real ID?

Each state has a different process for applying for a Real ID, so applicants should check requirements online. New Yorkers can [visit a special Department of Motor Vehicles page](#) detailing the process; many other states, including [California](#) and [Texas](#), offer similar sites either through their D.M.V. or government portals. In most instances, you can get a Real ID by visiting your local D.M.V., either as part of a standard license renewal or by filling out a special application.

But no matter where you live, to apply for a Real ID or change your license over, you’ll need to provide a Social Security number, prove your address through documents like a utility bill or bank statement, and verify your identity through a handful of additional documents like a birth certificate or passport.

In many instances, there is no additional cost to receive a Real ID if you’re already renewing your license, although some states charge extra — in Pennsylvania, for example, it’s an additional \$30 on top of the renewal fee.

If I don’t get a Real ID, can I still fly?

Yes. There are a number of other forms of identification that T.S.A. agents will accept for domestic air travel starting in May. These include a passport, a permanent residency card (also known as a Green Card), or the card for trusted traveler programs, including [Global Entry](#) and [NEXUS](#), which allows pre-screened travelers to transit quickly across the United States-Canada border.

In addition, a handful of states — Minnesota, Michigan, New York, Washington and Vermont — offer [Enhanced Driver’s Licenses](#), or E.D.L.s. Some travelers may prefer to opt for these over a Real ID because they can also be used at some land or sea border crossings. They provide proof of U.S. citizenship, much like a passport, and are equipped with a radio-frequency identification (RFID) chip that can display biographic and biometric data on the owner, including facial image, gender, date of birth and citizenship status, to U.S. Customs and Border Protection agents.

E.D.L.s are Real ID-compliant, as well, although instead of a star, they have an American flag. The flag’s location varies by state.

E.D.L.s can be used by travelers crossing land and sea borders to Canada, Mexico, Bermuda and the Caribbean, but they can’t be used in lieu of a passport if you’re traveling anywhere by air.

Do children need a Real ID?

No. The T.S.A. doesn’t require kids under the age of 18 to show any identification right now when they’re traveling domestically with an adult.

For international travel, children of all ages are required to carry passports and that will continue.

Can a Real ID be used as a replacement for any other form of identification, like a passport?

It can’t. For the vast majority of travelers, becoming Real ID-compliant will be a matter of simply updating their driver’s licenses. Real IDs cannot be used at any international border, including land crossings with Canada and Mexico, and they can’t be used for sea travel on a cruise, either. International travelers will still be required to carry a passport.

Should I be concerned about my personal privacy?

	<p>Maybe. Many organizations, including the American Civil Liberties Union of New York, have decried the Real ID Act as a threat to personal privacy and an overstep of information gathering on the part of the federal government.</p> <p>“A lot of the security and privacy concerns revolve around the fact that it’s pushing every state’s D.M.V. into a national database,” said Anaya Robinson, a senior policy strategist for the A.C.L.U. of Colorado. “If someone were to hack that singular database, they could get the personal information of anyone.”</p> <p>For undocumented immigrants who seek out driver’s licenses so they can legally operate a motor vehicle, the shift to Real ID also presents a threat, Mr. Robinson added. “There’s a severe privacy concern in the immigration space of the federal government, Homeland Security and I.C.E. being able to access that information,” he said.</p> <p>In addition to centralizing personal data like addresses and citizenship status into a federal database, the cards also carry a machine-readable zone that can be scanned for information on the card owner’s identity, which detractors say also presents a risk of identify theft.</p> <p>But only 37 percent of Americans have a passport, according to estimates from the U.S. State Department, so if you plan to fly after May 2023 and don’t want to scramble with alternative documentation, you’ll need to update your driver’s license.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	11/06 Public acceptance grows for Wagner Group
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/11/06/world/ukraine-war-news-russia-updates#the-wagner-mercenary-group-opens-a-center-in-st-petersburg-signaling-broader-mainstream-acceptance
GIST	<p>The founder of the Wagner Group, a private military contractor whose mercenaries have been effective fighters for Moscow in Ukraine, has put the company’s name on a newly opened office tower in St. Petersburg, a sign of its growing role in President Vladimir V. Putin’s Russia.</p> <p>A curvy glass tower in St. Petersburg, Russia’s second-largest city, was rebranded on Friday as the “Wagner Center.” Its opening highlighted how the company’s founder, Yevgeny Prigozhin, who used to be a shadowy figure in Mr. Putin’s circle, is becoming an emboldened player in Russian political life, taking on a growing public role.</p> <p>Mr. Prigozhin said in a statement that the center will serve as a “military technology center,” which he described as a free hub for inventors, engineers and information technology specialists who would work at “improving Russia’s defense capabilities, including in the information sphere.”</p> <p>On its website, the center encouraged visitors to submit their projects or fill out a questionnaire to become a resident. At the same time, a popular Russian real estate website listed space at the “Wagner Center” for lease.</p> <p>A report by Fontanka, a Russian news website, said that most of the building was empty on the opening day. Some offices were filled with the staff of ultrapatriotic news websites. One of the lobbies presented an exhibition of drones, Fontanka reported.</p> <p>After years of denying he was connected to the Wagner Group — a sprawling private security company that has deployed mercenaries in Syria and Africa — last month Mr. Prigozhin admitted his control over it.</p> <p>Wagner units have been among the few Russian military formations still capable of advancing in Ukraine in recent weeks. The broad Russian military offensive came to a standstill in July and suffered a number of setbacks in early fall.</p>

	<p>In recent weeks, Mr. Prigozhin has questioned the army's faltering performance in Ukraine. Together with another prominent hawk, the Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov, Mr. Prigozhin has openly criticized Russian military commanders and has said that they must "run to the front barefoot with rifles."</p> <p>Mr. Prigozhin's growing audacity was also on display at the end of October, when he accused Aleksandr Beglov, the governor of St. Petersburg, Mr. Putin's hometown, of running an organized crime gang in the city and asked Russia's prosecutor general to conduct a check.</p> <p>A former prison inmate himself, Mr. Prigozhin also visited Russian penal colonies offering inmates jobs in Wagner's ranks.</p> <p>On Friday, Mr. Putin signed a law that allows for people convicted of serious crimes who have recently been released from prison to be conscripted into the Russian army.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	11/06 Ukraine nuclear plant power restored
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/11/06/world/ukraine-war-news-russia-updates#external-power-is-restored-again-to-the-zaporizhzhia-nuclear-plant-easing-risk-of-an-accident
GIST	<p>Workers have repaired two vital external power lines at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant that are needed to power cooling systems. The repairs took two days, highlighting the precarious safety situation at the plant, the United Nations' nuclear watchdog agency said on Saturday.</p> <p>The plant, with six reactors, lies on the Dnipro River, where Russian and Ukrainian forces are fighting over the Kherson region.</p> <p>Russian forces control the surrounding area and the plant, but Ukrainian engineers still operate it and two U.N. inspectors are on site. Moscow and Kyiv have blamed each other for the interruptions in power.</p> <p>Shelling and other explosions from mines around the sprawling plant have severed the external power lines several times in recent months, forcing its engineers to rely on diesel generators and shut down reactors to avoid an accident.</p> <p>The lines were cut again by Russian shelling on Wednesday night, and the plant again switched to diesel power, according to Energoatom, the Ukrainian power company that operates the plant. The generators have a 15-day supply of fuel.</p> <p>Rafael Mariano Grossi, the director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, said his inspectors at the plant had confirmed the staff had repaired the two damaged external power lines by Friday afternoon, and by 10 p.m., power was restored to the six reactors and the generators were turned off.</p> <p>Still, Mr. Grossi said the repeated power outages "all too clearly demonstrate the extremely serious nuclear safety and security situation" at the plant. He repeated his call for the warring sides to establish a demilitarized zone around the reactors.</p> <p>"So far, the brave staff of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant have always managed to maintain the safe operation of the six units," he said. "But it can't go on like this."</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	11/06 Russia declining prospect as arms exporter
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/11/06/world/ukraine-war-news-russia-updates#russia-weapons-southeast-asia
GIST	Arms sales have long been an important part of Russian foreign policy. But those sales were declining before the invasion of Ukraine, and analysts say that the war will probably hasten the trend.

Russia's performance on the battlefield has damaged its reputation as a military power, they say, and financial and export controls by the U.S. and European governments will make it that much harder for the Kremlin to present itself as a reliable long-term arms supplier for future deals.

"I don't think Russia can recover as a major arms exporter from this," said Ian Storey, a political scientist at the ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute in Singapore who studies security issues in Asia. "Not for a long time, if ever."

Russia is still the world's second-largest arms exporter after the United States, and its sales of air defense systems and combat aircraft to China and Egypt — its second- and third-largest clients after India — have risen substantially in recent years, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, known as SIPRI.

But from 2017 to 2021, Russia's share of the global arms export market declined by 5 percent, to 19 percent, compared with the previous four-year period, according to SIPRI data. Its exports also fell by about a quarter, primarily because of decreasing demand from India and Vietnam.

As the war in Ukraine grinds on and sanctions against Russia increase, doubts are growing about the quality of Russian weapons, as well as Moscow's capacity to produce advanced weapons and provide long-term support for clients who buy them, said Siemon Wezeman, a senior arms researcher at SIPRI.

"Russia just doesn't have the technology base or the economy to support development of many types of new weapons and components," he said.

Analysts say that Southeast Asia, where Russia has traditionally been the top arms supplier, is a useful case study in the Kremlin's declining prospects as an arms exporter.

From 2017 to 2021, South Korea eclipsed Russia as the region's top arms supplier, providing 18 percent of the region's arms imports, according to SIPRI data. No other exporter accounted for more than 14 percent.

During that period, South Korea sent warships to the Philippines and Thailand, submarines to Indonesia, and combat and trainer aircraft to the Philippines and Thailand. Russia also lost a few potential deals. Indonesia canceled an order for 11 Russian fighter jets last year, buying American and French planes instead.

For many Southeast Asian nations, the United States is an increasingly attractive arms supplier because it links weapons purchases with military or diplomatic support against China, Mr. Wezeman said. Several European arms suppliers have been willing to help countries in the region develop their own arms industries and capabilities, in some cases through technology transfers, he added.

Another reason to avoid purchasing Russian arms is to signal a neutral position on the invasion of Ukraine, said John Parachini, a senior defense researcher at the RAND Corporation.

"Despite a likely aggressive Russian effort to market its arms exports in the Southeast Asia, they will find fewer customers," he said.

One exception might be Myanmar, where the ruling military junta, saddled with U.S. sanctions that limit its weapons purchases, has signaled a willingness to sign more arms deals with Russia. However, there are questions about whether the Kremlin would have the supplies to manufacture them.

Another could be Vietnam, Russia's largest arms client in Southeast Asia. Because that country's military arsenal has been built around Soviet and Russian weaponry for decades, adding weapons from new suppliers could create compatibility issues, said Ridzwan Rahmat, the principal defense analyst at Janes, based in Singapore.

	<p>At the same time, he added, Vietnam appears to be “slowly shifting its orbit from Russian systems to a mix that includes NATO-compliant ones, although this will take decades.”</p> <p>Even before the war, Vietnam was trying to diversify its arsenal by manufacturing its own guns and troop carriers and buying small amounts of weapons from India and Israel. The war in Ukraine will likely accelerate that process, and it could even spur Vietnam to buy Western-made weapons on a much faster timeline than it had planned, said Nguyen The Phuong, a scholar of Vietnam’s military at the University of New South Wales in Australia.</p> <p>“If we want to maintain some kind of deterrence capability toward China, the modernization has to speed up like 10 times faster,” he said.</p>
	Return to Top

HEADLINE	11/06 Largest forced displacement since WWII
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/11/06/world/ukraine-war-news-russia-updates#the-soaring-number-of-refugees-from-the-war-is-increasing-disquiet-in-europe
GIST	<p>In Brussels, asylum seekers are forced to shelter in cardboard boxes on the street. Across southern Germany, small-town mayors are opening gyms and auditoriums to house ever more refugees. And in the Netherlands, where a 3-month-old baby died this year, the government is being sued for inhumane camp conditions.</p> <p>With Russia waging war on its doorstep, Europe has taken in 4.4 million Ukrainians this year, in addition to more than 365,000 first-time asylum applicants, many fleeing threats in Syria and Afghanistan.</p> <p>That is more than in 2015, which stood out as the landmark period of migration in contemporary European history, when 1.2 million refugees fleeing wars in the Middle East arrived, the bulk of them in Germany. The country’s former chancellor, Angela Merkel, encouraged their welcome with her now-famous line: “We can do it.”</p> <p>But how Europe will do it again this time is raising nettlesome questions about the distribution of refugees — and their uneven treatment — while heightening concerns over the anticipated arrival of still more Ukrainians as temperatures drop and Russia intensifies its strikes on civilian infrastructure.</p> <p>“This is going to be a tough winter in Europe, which is facing the biggest forced displacement since World War II,” said Hanne Beirens, the head of the Migration Policy Institute Europe, a Brussels-based research institution. “The conflict in Ukraine is being protracted, and the Ukrainians are going to stay longer.”</p> <p>As it builds and lingers, Europe’s humanitarian crisis holds the increasing risk of political fallout as a host of challenges pile up.</p>
	Return to Top

HEADLINE	11/06 Russia top general relieved of command?
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/11/06/world/ukraine-war-news-russia-updates#russian-state-media-confirms-that-a-top-general-is-no-longer-in-his-post
GIST	<p>The senior Russian military commander who was publicly bashed by a close ally of President Vladimir V. Putin over his performance in Ukraine is no longer in his post, according to Russian state media, in what appeared to be the latest in a string of personnel shake-ups as Moscow grapples with open criticism of its setbacks on the battlefield.</p> <p>Unconfirmed news reports that Col. Gen. Alexander Lapin had been relieved of command have been swirling since last month.</p>

Then, last week, the Russian state news agency Tass [reported](#) that Maj. Gen. Alexander Linkov was now the interim commander of the Central Military District, meaning that he had assumed General Lapin's role — at least temporarily.

General Lapin's fate had been the subject of increasing speculation since Ramzan Kadyrov, the strongman leader of the southern Russian republic of Chechnya, slammed him as "incompetent" in [a Telegram post](#) last month. Mr. Kadyrov's post blamed General Lapin directly for Russian forces' loss of the key city of Lyman in eastern Ukraine, and said that the general [should be "sent to the front to wash his shame off with blood."](#)

The comments were part of highly unusual public criticism from right-wing hawks close to Mr. Putin about Russian forces' struggles in the face of Ukrainian counteroffensives. Among those questioning the handling of the war in Ukraine were Yevgeny Prigozhin, the founder of the Wagner mercenary group.

The report from Tass on Thursday was the first official acknowledgment that General Lapin, who in July Mr. Putin conferred the title "Hero of Russia," was no longer in command. But it did not specify whether the general was expected to return to his post or had been dismissed.

On Sunday, Britain's defense intelligence agency said that if General Lapin's removal was confirmed, it would be the latest in a series of dismissals of top Russian military officials, and the first since Russia's Defense Ministry last month appointed a new overall commander for its forces in Ukraine, [Gen. Sergei Surovikin](#). The commanders of the eastern, southern and western military districts had already been replaced since the war began.

"These dismissals represent a pattern of blame against senior Russian military commanders for failures to achieve Russian objectives on the battlefield," the agency wrote in its latest daily update. "This is in part likely an attempt to insulate and deflect blame from Russian senior leadership at home."

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/06 Russia forces intensify fight for eastern city
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/11/06/world/ukraine-war-news-russia-updates#russian-forces-intensify-the-fight-for-bakhmut-amid-setbacks-elsewhere
GIST	<p>Fighting raged around the Ukrainian-held city of Bakhmut, Russian and Ukrainian authorities said on Sunday, as Moscow sought to capture an eastern city for the first time in months amid a string of recent setbacks on the battlefield.</p> <p>A correspondent for Russia's state-run RIA Novosti news agency said that troops with the Wagner Group, a private military force with ties to President Vladimir V. Putin, had seized the village of Ivanograd, which is close to a road on Bakhmut's southern approach, and were fighting fierce battles in another suburb.</p> <p>A spokesman for Ukraine's forces in the east, Serhii Cherevaty, said that Bakhmut was "one of the hottest spots" in the region, and the place where "the enemy is the most aggressive, with the concentration of its maximum forces." He told a Ukrainian television channel that 30,000 Russian personnel were deployed to the assault.</p> <p>Even as Russian forces appeared to be attacking Bakhmut from several directions, it was not immediately clear what they would gain by capturing a city that months of relentless bombardment have reduced nearly to rubble. Independent military analysts have said that the campaign for Bakhmut, an industrial center that was home to 70,000 people before the war, serves little strategic purpose for Moscow because Ukrainian advances to the north have severed the city from important rail links.</p> <p>There was no independent confirmation of the battlefield developments, but comments by Ukrainian officials indicated an intensifying Russian push on the city, and a growing toll for the civilians who remain there.</p>

Pavlo Kyrylenko, the Ukrainian military administrator for the Donetsk region, which includes Bakhmut, said that Russian forces had killed three civilians in the region on Friday, including two in Bakhmut. The deputy mayor of Bakhmut, Oleksandr Marchenko, told the Reuters news agency on Saturday that Russia's troops were "trying to storm the city from several directions."

Most residents have fled Bakhmut, and [New York Times journalists who visited the city in recent days](#) observed small groups of Ukrainian soldiers gathering in abandoned buildings and firing mortars from the street.

As Ukrainian forces have held out, Bakhmut has become a symbol of Russia's failure to achieve Mr. Putin's objective of controlling the entire eastern Donbas area, an industrial territory where Moscow-backed separatists established breakaway republics in 2014. In April, Mr. Putin made capture of the Donbas a military priority and, last month, Russia illegally annexed the area's two regions, Luhansk and Donetsk.

But Moscow has made little progress since July, when it captured the last cities in Luhansk. Ukrainian forces sweeping down from the reclaimed Kharkiv region in the northeast have gained ground in the Donbas while, hundreds of miles to the south, Russian troops are under pressure to hold on to Kherson, one of the first regions they captured after invading Ukraine in February.

Michael Kofman, director of the Russia Studies Program at the Center for a New American Security, said on the [War on the Rocks podcast](#) last week that Russian forces had been "trying to grind their way in Bakhmut for months now," and added, "They haven't taken very much territory at all."

Mr. Kofman said that the city was an important prize for the Wagner Group's leader, [Yevgeny V. Prigozhin](#), a Russian businessman and close associate of Mr. Putin, and that his stature would rise within the Kremlin if his campaign were to succeed. But his forces have suffered significant losses in Bakhmut in recent days, according to Mr. Kofman, who described the push there as a "pointless offensive" for Russia.

Several military analysts say that Ukraine's successful counteroffensive in Kharkiv in September deprived Bakhmut of its strategic significance, since Moscow has lost control of the railway hubs in the cities of Izium and Lyman, meaning it cannot use Bakhmut as a launchpad for attacks on other cities in Donetsk.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/05 Putin's control Central Asia 'allies' unravels
SOURCE	https://themilitant.com/2022/11/05/putins-control-over-central-asia-allies-unravels/
GIST	<p>Russian President Vladimir Putin's brutal invasion of Ukraine, meant to expand Moscow's territory and "sphere of influence," has had the opposite effect across the old Russian empire. In Central Asia and the South Caucasus, the Kremlin's political authority is shrinking. This is part of global shifts occasioned by the war that are affecting the capitalist "world order."</p> <p>The former Soviet Socialist Republics of Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, in a region bounded by Russia, China, Afghanistan and the Caspian Sea, gained independence in 1991 with the implosion of the USSR. Now, with Moscow increasingly bogged down by its war in Ukraine, the capitalist rulers in these countries are taking even more distance. None have supported Putin's "annexations" in Ukraine.</p> <p>Beijing and Ankara, as well as Washington, hope to gain from the political space opening up in this vast resource-rich region.</p> <p>"We want to be respected," not treated like part of the former Soviet Union, Tajikistan President Emomali Rahmon told Putin at a summit of 27 Asian countries, including China, India and Russia, in Astana, Kazakhstan, Oct. 14.</p>

The day before at the meeting, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan urged support for the “sovereignty and territorial integrity” of Kazakhstan and its neighbors.

During a visit to the country a month earlier, Chinese President Xi Jinping said Beijing was opposed to interference by external forces in the internal affairs of Central Asian countries. The Chinese rulers are expanding investments in Central Asia. Today China’s economy is 10 times bigger than that of Russia, and Beijing is now the main trading partner of these countries.

Xi has also taken some distance from Putin’s assault on Ukraine’s sovereignty. During the summit Beijing penned a pact with Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan for a proposed new rail line to carry Chinese exports to Europe, bypassing sanctions-hit rail links through Russia. This shorter route would break Moscow’s stranglehold on land transport across Eurasia.

At the same time that the Central Asian rulers are embracing Beijing’s trade, investment and security guarantees, they also face countervailing pressures. The mainly Muslim toilers in these countries identify with the Uighurs, who face brutal repression at the hands of Beijing’s rulers in the adjacent Xinjian region.

In January, Moscow rushed 2,000 mainly Russian troops to Kazakhstan to prop up the government against a wave of protest. Two years earlier Russian troops had been dispatched to the Caucasus to enforce a Moscow-mediated truce between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

But the Ukraine war has changed these relations. In September the Kremlin failed to intervene in a Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan border war. It also didn’t act on the Armenian government’s call for help to halt renewed attacks by Azerbaijani forces backed by the Turkish government.

The Kazakh government, like the other Central Asia regimes, has taken its distance from Putin’s war in Ukraine. Parts of northern Kazakhstan are inhabited by ethnic Russians, and their numbers have swelled by Russians fleeing Putin’s new draft. Nationalist forces there call for these areas to be returned to Russia, the same pretext Putin used to invade Ukraine.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/05 Georgia booms as Russians flee Putin war
SOURCE	https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/russia-with-cash-georgia-booms-russians-flee-putins-war-2022-11-05/
GIST	<p>TBILISI, Nov 5 (Reuters) - As war chokes Europe, a small nation wedged beneath Russia is enjoying an unexpected economic boom.</p> <p>Georgia is on course to become one of the world's fastest-growing economies this year following a dramatic influx of more than 100,000 Russians since Moscow's invasion of Ukraine and Vladimir Putin's mobilisation drive to drum up war recruits.</p> <p>As much of the globe teeters towards recession, this country of 3.7 million people bordering the Black Sea is expected to record a vigorous 10% growth in economic output for 2022 amid a consumption-led boom, according to international institutions.</p> <p>That would see the modest \$19 billion economy, well known in the region for its mountains, forests and wine valleys, outpace supercharged emerging markets such as Vietnam and oil exporters such as Kuwait buoyed by high crude prices.</p> <p>"On the economic side, Georgia is doing very well," Vakhtang Butskhrikidze, CEO of the country's largest bank TBC, told Reuters in an interview at its Tbilisi headquarters.</p> <p>"There's some kind of boom," he added. "All industries are doing very well from micros up to corporates. I can't think of any industry which this year has problems."</p>

At least 112,000 Russians have emigrated to Georgia this year, border-crossing statistics show. A first large wave of 43,000 arrived after Russia invaded Ukraine on Feb. 24 and Putin moved to quash opposition to the war at home, according to the Georgia government, with a second wave coming after Putin announced the nationwide mobilisation drive in late September.

Georgia's economic boom - whether short-lived or not - has confounded many experts who saw dire consequences from the war for the ex-Soviet republic, whose economic fortunes are closely tied to its larger neighbour through exports and tourists.

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), for example, predicted in March the Ukraine conflict would deal a major blow to the Georgian economy. Likewise the World Bank forecast in April that the country's growth for 2022 would drop to 2.5% from an initial 5.5%.

"Despite all expectations that we had ... that this war on Ukraine will have significant negative implications on the Georgian economy, so far we don't see materialization of these risks," said Dimitar Bogov, the EBRD's lead economist for Eastern Europe and the Caucasus.

"On the contrary, we see the Georgian economy growing quite well this year, double digits."

Yet the stellar growth is not benefiting everyone, with the arrival of tens of thousands of Russians, many tech professionals with plenty of cash, driving up prices and squeezing some Georgians out of parts of the economy such as the housing rental market and education.

Business leaders also worry that the country could face a hard landing should the war end and Russians return home.

TO GEORGIA WITH \$1 BILLION

Georgia itself fought a short war with Russia in 2008 over South Ossetia and Abkhazia, territories controlled by Russian-backed separatists.

Now, though, Georgia's economy is reaping the benefits of its proximity to the superpower - the two share a land border crossing - and a liberal immigration policy which lets Russians and people from many other countries live, work and set up businesses in the country without needing a visa.

Furthermore, those fleeing Russia's war are accompanied by a wave of money.

Between April and September, Russians transferred more than \$1 billion to Georgia via banks or money-transfer services, five times higher than during the same months of 2021, according to the Georgian central bank.

That inflow has helped push the Georgian Lari to its strongest level in three years.

Roughly half of the Russian arrivals are from the tech sector, according to TBC's CEO Butskhrikidze and local media outlets, chiming with surveys and estimates from industry figures in Russia that pointed to an exodus of tens of thousands of highly-mobile IT workers after the invasion of Ukraine.

"These are high-end people, rich people ... coming to Georgia with some business ideas and increasing consumption drastically," said Davit Keshelava, senior researcher at the International School of Economics at Tbilisi State University (ISET).

"We expected the war to have a lot of negative impacts," he added. "But it turned out quite different. It turned out to be positive."

NO ROOMS IN TBILISI

Nowhere is the impact of the new arrivals more evident than in the capital's housing rental market, where increased demand is aggravating tensions.

Rent in Tbilisi is up 75% this year, according to an analysis by TBC bank, and some low-earners and students are finding themselves at the centre of what activists say is a growing housing crisis.

Georgian Nana Shonia, 19, agreed a two-year deal for a city centre apartment at \$150 a month, just weeks before Russia invaded. In July, her landlord kicked her out, forcing her to move to a rough neighbourhood on the edge of the city.

"It used to take me 10 minutes to get to work. Now it's a minimum of 40, I have to take a bus and the metro and often get stuck in traffic jams," she said, attributing the change in market dynamics to the surge of newcomers.

Helen Jose, a 21-year-old medical student from India, has been crashing at her friend's for a month after her rent doubled over the summer break.

"Before it was very easy to find an apartment. But so many of my friends have been told to leave, because there are Russians willing to pay more than us," she said.

University figures have also reported significant numbers of students delaying their studies in Tbilisi because they can't afford accommodation in the city, Keshelava at ISET said.

"THE CRISIS COULD HIT"

TBC's Butskhrikidze said he saw potential in the new arrivals to fill skills gaps in the Georgian economy.

"They are very young, technology-educated and have knowledge - for us and for other Georgian companies this is quite a useful opportunity," he said.

"A key challenge for us is technology. And unfortunately on that side we are competing with high-tech companies in the United States and Europe," he added. "To have a quick win, these migrants are very helpful."

Nonetheless, economists and businesses remain concerned about longer-term negative effects from the war, and what might happen should the Russians return home.

"We don't build our future plans on the newcomers," said Shio Khetsuriani, the CEO of Archi, one of Georgia's largest real-estate development companies.

Even with rental prices surging, Khetsuriani says development companies are not keen to over-invest in the housing market, especially with prices for materials and equipment increasing. While landlords may be cashing in on surging rents, profit margins for apartment sales have barely shifted, he said.

Economists also caution the boom may not last, and are encouraging the Georgian government to use healthy tax revenues to pay down debt and build up foreign currency reserves while they can.

"We have to be aware that all these factors that are driving growth this year are temporary, and it does not guarantee sustainable growth in the following years, so therefore caution is needed," said Bogov at the EBRD.

"Uncertainty is still there and the crisis could hit Georgia with some delay."

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/06 China warns Switzerland over sanctions
SOURCE	https://www.reuters.com/world/chinese-ambassador-warns-swiss-sanction-us-ties-will-suffer-2022-11-06/

GIST	<p>ZURICH, Nov 6 (Reuters) - Switzerland should avoid following the European Union by imposing sanctions on China if it cares about Swiss-Sino relations, the Chinese ambassador to Bern told the NZZ am Sonntag newspaper.</p> <p>Last year, the EU accused Chinese officials of mass detentions of Muslim Uighurs and human rights abuses in the Xinjiang region and imposed its first sanctions against Beijing since an arms embargo in 1989 following the Tiananmen Square crackdown.</p> <p>Switzerland has not yet decided to follow the EU's lead.</p> <p>"Anyone who really cares about the friendly relations between the two countries and who makes responsible policy will not agree to the sanctions," China's ambassador in Bern, Wang Shihting, told the NZZ am Sonntag.</p> <p>"If Switzerland adopts the sanctions and the situation develops in an uncontrolled direction, Sino-Swiss relations will suffer," he added.</p> <p>The head of the Swiss agency that implements economic sanctions said in a newspaper interview in July she expects the neutral country to adopt any punitive measures the EU launches against China if it invades Taiwan.</p> <p>In unveiling a new strategy on China last year, Bern announced few concrete policy changes and stressed the importance of bilateral ties. But it spoke more openly about its disapproval of China's human rights record than it has tended to do in the past.</p> <p>In 1950, Switzerland was one of the first western countries to recognise Communist China. Since 2010, China has been its biggest trading partner in Asia and its third-largest globally after the EU and the United States.</p> <p>A bilateral free trade agreement took effect in July 2014, and the two countries this year launched a joint platform for stock listings and trading.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	11/06 China posts 6mo-high Covid count
SOURCE	https://www.reuters.com/world/china/china-posts-6-month-high-covid-count-it-sticks-with-strategy-2022-11-06/
GIST	<p>BEIJING, Nov 6 (Reuters) - China on Sunday reported its highest number of new COVID-19 infections in six months, a day after health officials said they were sticking with strict coronavirus curbs, likely disappointing recent investor hopes for an easing.</p> <p>China recorded 4,420 new locally transmitted COVID-19 infections on Saturday, the National Health Commission said, the most since May 6 and compared up from 3,659 new local cases a day earlier.</p> <p>While case numbers are extremely low by global standards, China has stuck with a zero-COVID approach nearly three years into the pandemic that involves lockdowns, quarantines, frequent testing and a drastic decrease in inbound travel.</p> <p>At a news conference on Saturday, health officials reiterated their commitment to the "dynamic-clearing" approach to COVID cases as soon as they emerge.</p> <p>China's anti-COVID measures are "completely correct, as well as the most economical and effective", said disease control official Hu Xiang. "We should adhere to the principle of putting people and lives first, and the broader strategy of preventing imports from outside and internal rebounds."</p>

	<p>Chinese stocks soared last week on rumours of a possible easing of the COVID curbs, and media reports that some tweaks to policy could be coming soon.</p> <p>However, many analysts have said they do not expect significant easing to begin until after China's annual parliamentary session in March.</p> <p>Goldman Sachs analysts said Saturday's announcement showed "the government still needs to keep its zero-COVID policy until all preparations are done. This may take a few months, in our view," they wrote, saying their "baseline" expectation was for a reopening in the April-June quarter.</p> <p>The southern city of Guangzhou continued to report rising infections, with 66 new locally transmitted symptomatic and 1,259 asymptomatic cases, compared with 111 symptomatic and 635 asymptomatic cases a day before, authorities in the city of nearly 19 million people said.</p> <p>China's capital Beijing reported 43 symptomatic and six asymptomatic cases, compared with 37 symptomatic and five asymptomatic cases the previous day.</p> <p>Still, the annual Beijing marathon took place on Sunday morning under strict COVID protocols, after being cancelled the previous two years.</p> <p>Some 26,000 participants registered for the event that began under smoggy skies in central Beijing's Tiananmen Square. Runners were required to take PCR tests for the three days leading up to the race and not to leave Beijing for seven days.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	11/05 Italy closes ports to NGO ships
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/article/europe-france-germany-migration-italy-0093a5514cb2de4f26810c8996b53ca0
GIST	<p>MILAN (AP) — Italy's new far-right led government adopted a measure Friday formalizing the closure of its ports to rescue ships run by humanitarian groups as four vessels with more than 1,000 migrants continued to press for a safe port.</p> <p>Interior Minister Matteo Piantedosi told reporters Italy would allow a German migrant rescue ship to arrive in Sicily to land minors and those with medical emergencies, but he said the ship must then return to international waters with the rest of the migrants.</p> <p>Piantedosi said the German-flagged Humanity 1, carrying 179 people, "forced the situation by entering into territorial waters." But he emphasized Italy's position that it is the flag country of each charity-operated ship that must intervene to provide a safe port — and not Italy.</p> <p>The fate of the other ships was not addressed, but Piantedosi said France had indicated it "could accept the possibility to disembark" the Norway-flagged Ocean Viking, which has 234 people on board.</p> <p>The Humanity 1 was on its way to the Sicilian port of Catania, Piantedosi said, adding it would be allowed to remain in Italian waters only long enough to disembark minors and people needing medical care.</p> <p>The move came after France and Germany asked Italy's new government to grant a safe port to more than 1,000 people rescued by humanitarian groups in the central Mediterranean, some of whom have been stuck at sea for more than two weeks.</p> <p>The posture adopted by Premier Giorgia Meloni's new government marks a return to the anti-NGO position adopted by Matteo Salvini, now a deputy premier, when he was interior minister in 2018-2019.</p> <p>Salvini, currently the infrastructure minister in charge of ports, welcomed the new decree in a Facebook post, saying it would ensure that "foreign ships cannot arrive solely in Italy with their illegal immigrants."</p>

“If there are minors or the sick on board they may disembark, as it should be. All of the others aboard a German ship leave Italian waters and go toward Germany,” Salvini said.

Humanitarian groups caring for the rescued migrants on four ships in the central Mediterranean have sounded the alarm about deteriorating conditions, including people sleeping on floors in the cold and spreading fevers. A German charity, Mission Lifeline, reported that its ship was in “extreme danger” with 95 rescued people on board, half of them women and children, and bad weather forecast.

Piantedosi drafted new measures contending the non-governmental groups violated procedure by not properly coordinating their rescues, setting the groundwork for Italy to close the ports.

At the same time, Italian authorities continue to allow the arrivals of people rescued at sea by Italian patrols, including 456 arriving in Calabria on Thursday and some 6,000 over the last week.

Charities have denied circumventing procedures, and say it is their duty to rescue people in distress at sea. According to the U.N. refugee agency, coastal states are obligated to accept people from rescue ships “as soon as practicable,” and governments should cooperate to provide a place of safety for survivors.

French Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin said Friday that international law makes clear that Italy, as the closest port, “must let the ship in.” He cited the Ocean Viking operated by the group SOS Mediterranee, which has one of its headquarters in France.

“We have no doubt that Italy will welcome the ship ... that Italy will respect international law,” he told French news broadcaster BFM TV.

He also said France and Germany have told Italy that they are both ready to receive some of the migrants so Italy won’t “bear the burden alone.”

The German Foreign Ministry also asked Italy to intervene quickly to help those aboard the German-flagged Humanitarian 1. The boat was carrying 100 unaccompanied minors as well as a 7-month-old baby, the SOS Humanity charity said.

“They continue to be exposed to the elements, having to spend the cold nights on deck. Still, they are sleeping on the floor while winds and waves are increasing,” said spokesman Wasil Schauseil, adding that the state of limbo was adding to their mental stress. Fever was also spreading among the rescued people, with COVID tests turning up negative.

Also at sea is the Doctors Without Borders-run ship Geo Barents, also flagged by Norway, with 572 people on board, including 60 unaccompanied minors as well as families with children and the elderly. Another German-based charity, Mission Lifeline, said that its ship Rise Above picked up 95 people in three operations Thursday, and that neither Italy nor Malta had responded to requests for a port.

“The proportion of women, children and babies is unusually high, comprising about half of the people on board. We are particularly worried about the health of the eight babies as well as the small children. Many had been at sea for days at the time of the rescue and are extremely exhausted,” said Heremine Poschmann, a Mission Life spokeswoman.

The Rise Above “is in extreme danger,” Poschmann said, with bad weather forecast in the coming hours and with 104 people total on board a relatively small boat at 25 meters (82 feet) long. Normally they would transfer rescued people immediately to other bigger charity boats, but the other three are already at capacity, she said.

The migrants rescued at sea have mostly traveled through Libya, often being subjected to torture by human traffickers along the way, as they seek a better life in Europe.

HEADLINE	11/05 Russia, China block marine protection
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/article/europe-china-new-zealand-united-states-oceans-857b3438cbeec35b68a4b125fbc9373a
GIST	<p>WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP) — Russia and China have again blocked plans supported by the European Union, the United States and 23 other nations to protect three vast stretches of ocean around Antarctica from most fishing.</p> <p>But conservationists said there were some positives from a two-week international meeting on the future of Antarctica’s pristine waters that concluded in Australia late Friday.</p> <p>Those included an agreement on new protections for krill fishing and a commitment to meet in Chile next year to further discuss the proposal for the new marine protected areas, which combined would cover a swath of ocean larger than India.</p> <p>Many nations have become frustrated at the ability of Russia — and, to a lesser extent, China — to effectively veto proposals, as the rules of the group require it reach consensus before taking action.</p> <p>The U.S., which has been trying to find common ground with China, laid the blame for this year’s disagreements squarely on Russia, which the U.S. said was undermining the group.</p> <p>“Russia’s repeated rejection of the best available scientific information amounts to an abuse of its commitment to participate in consensus-based decision-making,” the State Department said in a statement.</p> <p>The Russian delegation did not immediately respond to a request for comment.</p> <p>The Pew Bertarelli Ocean Legacy Project said it was pleased the group had managed to agree on some measures around krill fishing. The small, shrimp-like creatures are eaten by seabirds, penguins, seals and whales.</p> <p>“While the krill conservation measure is a good first step, new evidence underscores that the best precautionary approach to Southern Ocean conservation couples ecosystem-based fishery management and marine protected areas,” said Andrea Kavanagh, director of the Project’s Antarctic and Southern Ocean work.</p> <p>Finding consensus among the group called the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources has always been hard but has been exacerbated by Russia’s war in Ukraine — which is also a member of the group. The meeting began last week with a mass walkout when the Russian delegates started speaking.</p> <p>Kostiantyn Demianenko, who led the Ukrainian delegation, last week told The Associated Press that Russia had no right to be at the table.</p> <p>“A state that kills the civilian population, destroys the air and ground civilian infrastructure of another country and defiantly violates the basic provisions of international law should definitely be limited in its right to participate in the activities of international organizations such as CCAMLR,” he wrote in an email.</p>
	Return to Top

HEADLINE	11/06 Japan PM vows to strengthen military
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/article/business-china-japan-united-states-europe-8aea8040ff6a3903c85be48eabdda322
GIST	<p>TOKYO (AP) — Japan’s Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said at an international fleet review Sunday that his country urgently needs to strengthen its military capabilities as security risks increase including threats from North Korea’s nuclear and missile advancement and Russia’s war on Ukraine.</p> <p>Eighteen warships from 12 countries participated in the review, including the United States, Australia, Canada, India, New Zealand, Singapore and South Korea, while the U.S. and France also sent warplanes.</p>

South Korea joined for the first time in seven years, in the latest sign of improvement in badly strained ties between Tokyo and Seoul over Japan's wartime atrocities.

"The security environment in the East and South China seas, especially around Japan, is increasingly becoming more severe," Kishida said, noting North Korea's increased missile firings, including one that flew over Japan last month, and growing concern about the impact in Asia of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Avoiding disputes and seeking dialogue is important, Kishida said, but it is also necessary to be prepared for provocations and threats to peace and stability. He repeated his pledge to significantly reinforce Japan's military capability within five years.

Kishida said Japan urgently needs to build more warships, strengthen anti-missile capability and improve working conditions for troops.

"We have no time to waste," Kishida said after his review aboard the JS Izumo, where naval officers from the participating countries gathered to review a demonstration of the frigates, submarines, supply ships and warplanes in Sagami Bay southwest of Tokyo.

The 248-meter- (813-foot) long Izumo has been retrofitted so that it can carry F-35Bs, stealth fighters capable of short take-offs and vertical landings, as Japan increasingly works side-by-side with the U.S. military.

Kishida said Japan will further strengthen the deterrence and response capability of the Japan-U.S. alliance.

Later Sunday, Kishida and U.S. Ambassador to Japan Rahm Emanuel were to visit the USS Ronald Reagan, the U.S. Navy's only aircraft carrier based outside the U.S. mainland, off the U.S. naval base of Yokosuka.

Emanuel stressed the importance of cooperation among U.S. allies. "Every time we do things in either a bilateral capacity, trilateral capacity or any other type of exercises that also brings in others, that puts China on their back heels because they realize that's the one thing they do not have is the one thing America has in abundance and we work at it extensively."

The U.S. military, which had just finished a joint exercise with South Korea that prompted missile barrages and other warnings from North Korea, is set to hold major drills with Japan later this month in southwestern Japan. Australia, Canada and Britain will join part of the drills, while France, India, New Zealand, the Philippines and South Korea are expected to take part as observers.

Japan has steadily stepped up its international defense role and military spending over the past decade, and plans to double its military budget in the next five to 10 years to about 2% of its GDP, citing a NATO standard, amid threats from North Korea and China's growing assertiveness.

China has reinforced its claims to virtually the entire South China Sea by constructing artificial islands equipped with military installations and airfields. Beijing also claims a string of islands that are controlled by Japan in the East China Sea, and has stepped up military harassment of self-ruled Taiwan, which it says is part of China to be annexed by force if necessary.

Kishida's government is currently working on a revision to its national security strategy and mid- to long-term defense policies, and is considering allowing the use of preemptive strikes in a major shift to Japan's self-defense-only postwar principle. Critics say preemptive strikes could violate Japan's pacifist constitution.

	<p>Apparently addressing concerns from Asian neighbors, Kishida said Japan will stick to its postwar pledge as a “pacifist nation” and continue to explain its security policy to gain understanding while asking other countries to do the same.</p> <p>Many of its neighbors, including South Korea, were victims of Japanese aggression in the first half of the 1900s, and an attempt by Japan to increase its military role and spending could be a sensitive issue.</p> <p>Sunday’s international fleet review marks the 70th anniversary of the founding of Japan’s postwar navy, called the Maritime Self-Defense Force, seven years after Japan was demilitarized after its World War II defeat. The naval ships and warplanes were to participate in joint exercises later on Sunday and Monday.</p> <p>It was the first time Japan hosted an international fleet review in 20 years. China did not take part but was expected to participate in the two-day Western Pacific Naval Symposium in Yokohama starting Monday with officers from about 30 countries discussing maritime security.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	11/06 Ukraine: Russia ‘brutality’ eastern region
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-putin-kyiv-martial-law-donetsk-4bca86846f073de6b1746adf9df13f14
GIST	<p>KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russian forces are stepping up their strikes in a fiercely contested region of eastern Ukraine, worsening the already tough conditions for residents and the defending army following Moscow’s illegal annexation and declaration of martial law in Donetsk province, Ukrainian authorities said.</p> <p>The attacks have almost completely destroyed the power plants that serve the city of Bakhmut and the nearby town of Soledar, Pavlo Kyrylenko, the region’s Ukrainian governor, said. Shelling killed one civilians and wounded three, he reported late Saturday.</p> <p>“The destruction is daily, if not hourly,” Kyrylenko said in a state television interview.</p> <p>Moscow-backed separatists controlled part of Donetsk for nearly eight years before Russia invaded Ukraine in late February. Protecting the separatists’ self-proclaimed republic there was one of Russian President Vladimir Putin’s justifications for the invasion, and his troops have spent months trying to capture the entire province.</p> <p>While Russia’s “greatest brutality” was focused in the Donetsk region, “constant fighting” continued elsewhere along the front line that stretches more than 1,000 kilometers (620 miles), Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in his nightly video address.</p> <p>Between Saturday and Sunday, Russia’s launched four missiles and 19 airstrikes impacting more than 35 villages in seven regions, from Chernihiv and Kharkiv in the northeast to Kherson and Mykolaiv in the south, according to the president’s office.</p> <p>Russia has focused on striking energy infrastructure over the last month, causing power shortages and rolling outages across the country. The capital, Kyiv, was scheduled to have hourly blackouts rotating Sunday in various parts of the city of some 3 million and the surrounding region,</p> <p>Rolling blackouts also were planned in the Chernihiv, Cherkasy, Zhytomyr, Sumy, Kharkiv and Poltava regions, Ukraine’s state-owned energy operator, Ukrenergo, said in a Telegram post.</p> <p>More positive news was the re-connection of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant to Ukraine’s power grid, local media reported Sunday. Europe’s largest nuclear plant needs electricity to maintain vital cooling system, but it had been running on emergency diesel generators since Russian shelling severed its outside connections,</p>

	<p>In the Donetsk city of Bakhmut, some 15,000 remaining residents were living under daily shelling and without water or power, according to local media. The city has been under attack for months, but the bombardment picked up after Russian forces experienced setbacks during Ukrainian counteroffensives in the Kharkiv and Kherson regions.</p> <p>In Kharkiv, officials are working to identify bodies found in mass graves after the Russians withdrew, Dmytro Chubenko, a spokesperson for the regional prosecutor's office, said in an interview with local media.</p> <p>DNA samples have been collected from 450 bodies discovered in a mass grave in the city of Izium, but the samples need to be matched with relatives and so far only 80 people have participated, he said.</p>
	Return to Top

HEADLINE	11/05 Russia law: mobilize convicts for military
SOURCE	https://www.cnn.com/2022/11/05/europe/russia-ukraine-law-mobilize-serious-crime-offenders-intl/index.html
GIST	<p>Russian President Vladimir Putin has signed a law to conscript citizens with unexpunged or outstanding convictions for murder, robbery, larceny, drug trafficking and other serious crimes under the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation to be called up for military service to mobilize.</p> <p>This makes it possible to mobilize hundreds of thousands of people who have been sentenced to probation or have recently been released from colonies who were previously forbidden to serve.</p> <p>The only group of criminals exempted from the decree are those who committed sex crimes against minors, treason, spying or terrorism. Also excluded are those convicted of the attempted assassination of a government official, hijacking an aircraft, extremist activity and illegal handling of nuclear materials and radioactive substances.</p> <p>President Vladimir Putin said Friday that the Kremlin had already mobilized an additional 18,000 soldiers above its goal of 300,000 to fight in its war in Ukraine from the general male population of Russia.</p> <p>Earlier this week, the Russian Ministry of Defense announced that all partial mobilization activities, including summons deliveries, had been suspended after officials said the draft's target of recruiting 300,000 personnel had been met.</p> <p>However, Putin's partial mobilization order will only end when the Russian President signs in an official decree. Until then, he reserves the right to recruit more people into military conscription in the future.</p> <p>The head of Russia's notorious Wagner forces, Yevgeny Prigozhin, has apparently summoned prisoners from Russian jails to join the mercenary group in fighting the Kremlin's war in Ukraine.</p> <p>The amendments signed by Putin are unrelated to these alleged recruitments. Instead, the law applies to prisoners who were conditionally convicted or released from colonies. These people usually must remain under the supervision of the authorities for eight to ten years until the conviction is canceled.</p> <p>They are not allowed to leave their place of residence and must comply with various restrictions.</p>
	Return to Top

HEADLINE	11/05 Settlement: FBI agent posed as reporter
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/article/business-lawsuits-freedom-of-information-act-5496b94bd7089669ab404eca7fc8569e
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON (AP) — The Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press will get a \$145,000 settlement following a pair of lawsuits filed after an FBI agent posed as a reporter for The Associated Press and created a fake story.</p>

The long-running Freedom of Information Act cases led to appeals court decisions that will help bolster access to public records, said Adam Marshall, an attorney for the group. The cases also shed light on FBI agents posing as members of the media, a tactic that free press advocates say undermines media credibility and blurs lines between law enforcement and the press.

The agency failed to follow its own rules over such undercover operations when an agent [posed as an AP reporter](#) and sent a link to a fake story in an investigation in Washington state in 2007, according to documents uncovered in the lawsuit filed along with The Associated Press.

Then-FBI Director James Comey called the technique “proper and appropriate” under FBI guidelines at the time, though he said it would require higher-level approvals when the incident came to light seven years later, in 2014. No actual story was published and it led to an arrest, he maintained.

The agent posing as an AP reporter sent a link to the fake article to a 15-year-old suspected of making bomb threats at a high school. When the teen clicked the link, a tracking tool revealed his computer’s location and helped agents confirm his identity.

The FBI declined to comment Friday.

Kathleen Carroll, then executive editor of the AP, said in 2014 that the FBI’s “unacceptable tactics undermine AP and the vital distinction between the government and the press.” A letter signed by two dozen news organizations called the revelations “inexcusable” and the Reporter’s Committee specifically called out the use of the AP’s name as “cover for delivery of electronic surveillance software.”

Lauren Easton, an Associated Press spokeswoman, declined additional comment Friday.

The lawsuits were filed as part of an effort to get records about FBI news-media impersonations, and eventually resulted in important court decisions about how far agencies must go in searching for requested documents and the standards they must meet in order to withhold documents, Marshall said. The settlement will cover attorney’s fees and costs.

“This has shown that there are significant, concerning and ongoing issues with respect to federal law enforcement impersonation of the press in the United States,” Marshall said. The cases have also “shown that the Reporters Committee and The Associated Press were committed to finding out as much as we could about what happened here for the public to know.”

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/05 CCP: Taiwan unification only way peace
SOURCE	https://www.newsmax.com/newsfront/china-communists-taiwan/2022/11/05/id/1095026/
GIST	<p>Top Communist Party ideologues say in a new book that bringing Taiwan back into China is the only way to keep it from being invaded by a foreign power and to achieve permanent peace.</p> <p>An article in the book that offers an official explanation for the party's constitutional amendment on Taiwan last month says that "a complete unification of the motherland" is the only way "compatriots on both sides" can remain free of the "shadow of civil war and jointly create and share permanent peace across the Taiwan Strait," reports the South China Morning Post Saturday.</p> <p>Last month, the Chinese Communist Party added the constitutional amendment to enshrine opposition to Taiwan's independence, marking the first time it has made an explicit reference to tensions with the island.</p> <p>The amendment was part of a resolution signed by more than 2,000 delegates attending the party's national congress last week. The resolution also consolidated President Xi Jinping's signature policies and slogans while affirming his power. The Chinese leader was approved for a third term in office during the congress.</p>

The article about the amendment also explains that by unifying China and Taiwan, the Chinese can "defeat the attempts of external forces to contain China and safeguard national sovereignty, security and development interests" while eliminating hidden dangers of Taiwan's independence forces "separating China."

The book, "Questions and Answers of the 20th Party Congress Constitution Amendments," was published on Oct. 28 by Party Building Books Publishing House, which is affiliated with the Central Organization Department, the party's main body for personnel appointment and training.

It was written by approximately two dozen of the party's top ideologues led by three members of the seven-person Politburo Standing Committee.

The book, however, does not discuss how Beijing and Taiwan will reach unification, but Xi, during the congress, said in his work report that Beijing would do its best to reunify with Taiwan. However, he did not promise to rule out the use of force.

The article also names the United States explicitly, saying some forces see mainland China "out of a hegemonic and Cold War mentality" as a major strategic opponent and want to use Taiwan to subdue China.

"The U.S. claims that it supports the One-China policy, not Taiwan independence; but some forces in the country have been acting the opposite," the article states. "They strengthen official connections with Taiwan, plan military sales and strengthen military ties between the U.S. and Taiwan."

And the article says the United States is encouraging tension in Taiwan while accusing China of "exerting pressure" against the island, but its articles said such actions are doomed to failure.

Tensions between China and the United States were strong last summer when House Speaker Nancy Pelosi visited Taiwan. Beijing responded with days of live-fire drills near the island and a series of incursions over the median line in the Taiwan Strait, which it had honored up to that point.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/05 Strategic Command: larger conflicts coming
SOURCE	https://www.newsmax.com/newsfront/nuclear-navy-war/2022/11/05/id/1095033/
GIST	<p>Adm. Charles Richard, commander of the U.S. Strategic Command, said Wednesday that the current conflict with Russia in Ukraine "is just the warm-up" for potentially larger conflicts in the future.</p> <p>"The big one is coming, and it isn't going to be very long before we're going to get tested in ways that we haven't been tested a long time," The Independent reported Richard saying during a speech at the Naval Submarine League's 2022 Annual Symposium and Industry Update in Arlington, Virginia.</p> <p>He said that deterring China is getting less effective as they build up capabilities "in the field" faster than the United States.</p> <p>"As those curves keep going, it isn't going to matter how good our [operating plan] is or how good our commanders are, or how good our horses are — we're not going to have enough of them," he said. "And that is a very near-term problem. Maybe the [U.S. submarine force is] the only true asymmetric advantage we still have against our opponents."</p> <p>According to the report, the Navy has been forced to close bases and its naval shipyards due to defense budget cuts, moving more responsibility to private sector companies.</p> <p>Adm. Mike Gilday, chief of naval operations, said in August that a "limited" industrial capacity is the largest barrier in increasing that branch's capabilities, the report said.</p>

[An October report](#) on the nation's military readiness by the Heritage Foundation found the U.S. was "weaker" in 2022 than it was the year before.

"The 2023 Index concludes that the current U.S. military force is at significant risk of not being able to meet the demands of a single major regional conflict while also attending to various presence and engagement activities," the report read. "It most likely would not be able to do more and is certainly ill-equipped to handle two nearly simultaneous 'major regional contingencies.'"

The report considered the current global environment including Asia, Europe and the Middle East in its assessment, noting that the "security threats" in Latin America and Africa do not rise to the level of directly threatening "vital" U.S. interests.

"This does not mean that we view Latin America and Africa as unimportant. It means only that the security challenges within these regions do not currently rise to the level of direct threats to America's vital interests as we have defined them," the report read.

While considering the possibility unlikely, the report noted Russia's large nuclear arsenal, and said it gives those weapons in the U.S. and NATO "relevance."

"[Russia] still maintains the world's largest nuclear arsenal, and although a strike on the U.S. is highly unlikely, the latent potential for such a strike still gives these weapons enough strategic value vis-à-vis America's NATO allies and interests in Europe to ensure their continued relevance," the report read.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/06 US presses Ukraine openness to negotiate?
SOURCE	https://www.newsmax.com/newsfront/ukraine-washington-urges/2022/11/06/id/1095051/
GIST	<p>The United States is privately encouraging Ukraine to signal an openness to negotiate with Russia, the Washington Post reported, as the State Department said Moscow was escalating the war and did not seriously wish to engage in peace talks.</p> <p>The newspaper cited unnamed sources as saying the request by American officials was not aimed at pushing Ukraine to the negotiating table, but a calculated attempt to ensure Kyiv maintains the support of other nations.</p> <p>U.S. and Ukrainian officials acknowledged that Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy's ban on talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin had generated concern in parts of Europe, Africa and Latin America, where the war's effects on costs of food and fuel are felt most sharply, the Post said.</p> <p>"Ukraine fatigue is a real thing for some of our partners," it quoted an unnamed U.S. official as saying.</p> <p>Zelenskiy signed a decree on Oct. 4 formally declaring the prospect of any Ukrainian talks with Putin "impossible" but leaving the door open to talks with Russia.</p> <p>The White House National Security Council had no immediate comment on the accuracy of the report.</p> <p>A State Department spokesperson responded: "We've said it before and will say it again: Actions speak louder than words. If Russia is ready for negotiation, it should stop its bombs and missiles and withdraw its forces from Ukraine.</p> <p>"The Kremlin continues to escalate this war. The Kremlin has demonstrated its unwillingness to seriously engage in negotiations since even before it launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine."</p> <p>The spokesperson also noted remarks by Zelenskiy on Friday, in which he said: "We are ready for peace, for a fair and just peace, the formula of which we have voiced many times."</p>

In his nightly address to the Ukrainian people on Friday, Zelenskiy added: "The world knows our position. This is respect for the U.N. Charter, respect for our territorial integrity, respect for our people."

U.S. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said during a visit to Kyiv on Friday that Washington's support for Ukraine would remain "unwavering and unflinching" after Tuesday's midterm congressional elections.

The United States announced \$400 million worth of additional security assistance for Ukraine, including refurbishing T-72 tanks from the Czech Republic and missiles for HAWK air defenses that could be used against Russian drones and cruise missiles.

The new assistance brought the amount of U.S. military aid sent to Kyiv to more than \$18.2 billion since the invasion.

FIGHTING

In the latest sign of Russia's retreat in one of the most bitterly contested areas in Ukraine, Putin publicly endorsed the evacuation of civilians from parts of Ukraine's southern Kherson region on Friday.

This appeared to be the first time Putin has endorsed the evacuations personally, although Moscow has been ferrying people out of an area it controls in Kherson on the west bank of the Dnipro River.

Last week Russia said the evacuation zone would also include a 15-km (10-mile) buffer area on the east bank.

Kyiv says the measures have included forced deportations of civilians, a war crime, which Russia denies.

Putin's comments came amid signs Russia could be preparing to abandon its military foothold on the west bank of the Dnipro, including Kherson city.

The regional capital is the only big city Russia has captured intact since its invasion in February. Its loss for Russian forces would be one of the severest blows of the war.

Pictures have circulated on the internet showing the main administration building in Kherson city with Russia's flag no longer flying atop it. Kyiv has been wary, saying such signs could be Russian deception to lure Ukrainian troops into a trap.

The fiercest fighting over the last week had taken place around Bakhmut and Soledar, in the eastern Donetsk region about 500 km (300 miles) northeast of Kherson, Zelenskiy said late on Friday.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/05 Gusty winds destructive trail North Sound
SOURCE	https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/wind-knocks-out-power-trees-into-houses-north-sound/YV2SH6636BBAHHZNQXBV6JWY74/
GIST	<p>The gusty winds that blew through the North Sound overnight left a trail of destruction, including knocking trees into power lines and homes.</p> <p>At the height of the Friday night storm, some 190,000 Snohomish County PUD customers were in the dark.</p> <p>Power crews have made some headway. But even now, tens of thousands of customers in the North Sound and across Western Washington are still without power.</p>

And there is widespread damage there. So much damage, and so much work to do to get the power back on.

Power crews are working here to do just that.

The wind blew out transformers and knocked trees into houses, too.

The cleanup was well underway at Vi Tran's South Everett home, after these three trees succumbed to the fierce winds.

"This is out of my imagination," exclaimed Tran. "Like wholly."

Tran wasn't home at about 11 o'clock Friday night when these trees gave way and fell onto his house.

"Yeah, I thought only like a little branch or something fall on top of the roof," said Tran. "That's it. But this way off."

His in-laws, visiting from Texas, were inside.

"But lucky we don't have anybody at the master (bedroom)," said Van Nguyen, Tran's sister-in-law. "No. My mom was asleep on the small room. My dad on the other room."

And they are not alone.

"I was laying in bed watching TV and heard a big wind and that crash on my roof," said John Caudle.

A few miles south, Caudle was inside his mobile home at Serene Village in Lynnwood when a huge poplar crashed into it.

He heard the tree come down.

"Oh, yeah," Caudle said. "I heard it hit that thing. And then it knocked all of the things out of my cupboards and everything else."

Besides trees, the gusty winds knocked out the power over a wide swatch of Snohomish County.

It plunged businesses like this Safeway in Marysville into the dark. And it has remained that way much of this Saturday for them and tens of thousands of other Snohomish PUD customers.

That may be a bit of a silver lining for John Caudle. He does have power. But there is a hole in his roof and rain is sure to return.

"Yeah, and I'll be putting a tarp on it," he said, laughing. "I don't know what else to do."

Power has been restored for about 90,000 customers. But that leaves still about 100,000 customers in the dark.

Crews started working last night.

They expect to be working for many more hours until they get everybody back on line.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/05 India travel risk: 5,300 bridges need repair
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/nov/05/indian-commuters-risk-their-lives-every-day-as-more-than-5000-bridges-need-repair

The [collapse of a bridge](#) in Gujarat that left 135 people dead has prompted concerns over the safety of thousands of other colonial-era structures across India.

The bridge in Morbi was more than a century old when it snapped in two last month while families had gathered on it to enjoy an evening on the river. Many of those standing in the middle of the bridge plunged into the river and drowned, while others died from the impact of falling on to the stones and boulders below.

The Gujarat government, ruled by the Bharatiya Janata party (BJP), had given the contract for repairing the 100-year-old suspension bridge to a local company called Oreva, which makes clocks.

Now fears are growing for India's other ageing bridges. The country has about 173,000 bridges and about 36,470 of them were built under the Raj. Almost 6,700 are even older, with some built 140 years ago, according to the most recent information in the Railways Audit Report of 2015.

Many of them are technically "distressed", meaning they are dilapidated, probably risky, and in need of urgent repair or reinforcement.

The Indian Bridge Management System centre estimates that at least 5,300 bridges are structurally distressed and need attention. One state alone, Uttar Pradesh, had as many as 226 distressed bridges in 2018.

Sahil Mhatre, a member of the Indian Institution of Bridge Engineers, said many distressed and old bridges were "structurally unaudited" and this was a matter of concern because those built by the British were intended for far smaller loads. "The government should be doing structural audits every three to four years, using strain gauge sensors to check the quality of the concrete for cracks or vibrations, to see if they can take the load on them. In modern bridges, sensors are embedded in the structure to sound alerts but India's old bridges obviously don't have them," he said.

In 2018, a parliamentary committee found that [India's railway bridges were a risk to passengers](#) and in dire need of upgrading. It reprimanded the railways for inordinate delays in repairing distressed bridges, which it said resulted in "the possibility of compromising passenger safety".

Its report also praised old British bridges for their quality: "While certain railway bridges constructed during British rule are in good condition, railway bridges constructed ... after independence are of inferior quality and need frequent repair ... [The] nexus between railway officials and a few contractors severely affects the quality and life of its construction."

However, India's prime minister, Narendra Modi, has been notoriously critical of Britain's legacy in India, targeting the English language and branding it a "colonial relic" that has generated a "slavish mentality". Abide with Me has been removed from India's annual republic day celebrations and replaced with a Hindi patriotic song, and the Indian army is considering whether to do away with the English names of some army regiments.

But Modi's critics have asked if his priorities are misplaced. "Instead of renaming streets and attacking English, the BJP would do better to face the real challenge, namely, to maintain colonial-era bridges that have lasted so long but are now coping with loads they were never intended to handle," said commentator Parsa Venkateshwar Rao Jr.

One of them is the old Yamuna Bridge in the Indian capital, which was built in 1866, making it one of the oldest in the country. Poor labourers sleep and live under the iron girders.

"The thousands of commuters who use it every day are risking their lives. It was meant for horses, carriages and pack animals. Now it's got trains and cars on it," said Atul Bose, who works with slum dwellers in the area.

	<p>Jatin L Singh, founder of the Rail Enthusiasts' Society, marvelled at how far-sighted British-era engineers were in designing bridges in such a way that they allowed for additional capacity to be added later.</p> <p>“The former Jubilee Bridge over the River Hooghly in Calcutta, built to mark Queen Victoria’s 50th anniversary, opened in 1885. It had one track for trains but the engineers created capacity for two tracks in case it was needed in future, which of course it was,” said Singh. After 131 years, the bridge was decommissioned in 2016.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	11/05 Hospital flu cases highest in a decade
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/nov/05/us-hospital-flu-cases-cdc-covid
GIST	<p>Hospitalizations from the flu are the highest they have been in a decade as experts warn that other Covid variants and respiratory illnesses are on the rise.</p> <p>Flu-related cases, hospitalizations, and deaths are all at a ten-year high, reported the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on Friday, with adults over the age of 65 and young children most affected.</p> <p>“We’re seeing the highest influenza hospitalization rates going back a decade,” said José Romero, director of National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases, at Friday’s briefing. “We are also reporting the second influenza-related pediatric death of the season.”</p> <p>Heading into the weekend, there were at least 1,600,000 cases, 13,000 hospitalizations, and 730 deaths from the flu, higher than the usual case count during this time of year.</p> <p>Rising flu cases come when hospitals are also battling against the respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and Covid variants that are dodging immunity from prior infection or vaccination.</p> <p>Hospitals feeling the strain from increased admissions are urging community members to get their wintertime vaccinations and keep the number of serious illnesses as low as possible.</p> <p>But vaccinations against the flu have decreased, with 5 million fewer flu vaccines being administered to US adults compared to last year, Reuters reported.</p> <p>Flu vaccination rates have also fallen among pregnant people, reported Reuters, a worrisome trend given that the vaccination protects the parent and baby.</p> <p>Health experts have said that it only appears flu season has arrived earlier than in years past, and it was not immediately clear how severe the spread of respiratory illnesses will be this winter.</p> <p>“Right now, we’re not seeing anything that would lead us to believe that it is more severe,” said Lynnette Brammer, a CDC team leader for domestic influenza surveillance. Brammer added that it is still early, as most winter illnesses tend to peak in December and January, NBC News reported.</p> <p>“There’s no doubt we will face some challenges this winter,” said Dawn O’Connell, the assistant secretary of Health and Human Services for Preparedness and Response. O’Connell also added that the earlier start to flu doesn’t necessarily mean more severe season.</p> <p>Southern parts of the US are most affected right now by the flu, ABC News reported. Texas, North and South Carolina, Alabama, Tennessee, Maryland, Mississippi, Georgia, and Virginia, all reported high levels of flu-like illnesses.</p> <p>New York and Washington DC similarly high levels.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	11/04 Day 254 of the Russia invasion
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/nov/04/russia-ukraine-war-at-a-glance-what-we-know-on-day-254-of-the-invasion
GIST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • G7 foreign ministers have agreed on the need for a coordination mechanism to help Ukraine repair, restore and defend its critical energy and water infrastructure, a senior US state department official has said. • Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said on Friday that he had agreed with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin that grain sent under the Black Sea export deal should go to poor African countries for free. “In my phone call with Vladimir Putin, he said ‘Let’s send this grain to countries such as Djibouti, Somalia and Sudan for free’ – and we agreed,” Erdogan said in a speech to businesspeople in Istanbul. • German chancellor Olaf Scholz is visiting China, and while there has urged Putin to extend the Black Sea grain deal when it expires on 19 November. • Dmitry Medvedev, long-term ally of Vladimir Putin, current deputy chairman of the Security Council of Russia, and previously both president and prime minister of Russia, has issued a broadside this morning claiming that Russia’s war has “a sacred purpose” and that “The goal is to stop the supreme ruler of hell, no matter what name he uses – Satan, Lucifer or Iblis.” • The mayor of Kyiv, Vitaliy Klitschko, has said 450,000 residents in the Ukrainian capital are without electricity on Friday morning. “This is one and a half times more than in previous days,” he said, adding the power system is overloaded. • The UN nuclear watchdog said Thursday it had found no sign of undeclared nuclear activity at three sites in Ukraine that it inspected at Kyiv’s request, in response to Russian allegations that work was being done on a “dirty bomb”. “Our technical and scientific evaluation of the results we have so far did not show any sign of undeclared nuclear activities and materials at these three locations,” the International Atomic Energy Agency said in a statement, adding that environmental samples taken would be analysed. • In southern Ukraine, a Russian-installed occupation official said Wednesday Moscow was likely to pull its troops from the west bank of the Dnipro River, signalling a huge retreat that, if confirmed, could be a major turning point in the war. “Most likely our units, our soldiers, will leave for the left [eastern] bank,” said Kirill Stremousov, the Russian-installed deputy civilian administrator of the Kherson region, in an interview with Solovyov Live, a pro-Kremlin online media outlet. • Ukraine said it was wary that Moscow could be setting a trap by feigning a pull-out from the Kherson region and maintained its forces were still fighting in the area. Natalia Humeniuk, a spokesperson for Ukraine’s southern military command, said it could be a Russian trap. “This could be a manifestation of a particular provocation, in order to create the impression that the settlements are abandoned, that it is safe to enter them, while they are preparing for street battles,” she said in televised comments. “We continue fighting, also in the Kherson direction, despite the fact that the enemy is trying to convince us that they are leaving the settlements and creating the effect of a total evacuation.” • US secretary of defence, Lloyd Austin, said Thursday he believes that Ukrainian forces are able to retake Kherson, calling their work “methodical” and “effective”. • Ukraine has described the forced relocation of its citizens in the Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions as “deportations” and “war crimes”. Russian authorities in Kherson have been relocating civilians, claiming it is for their safety as Ukrainian forces move closer. One week after Russian authorities relocated 70,000 civilians from the right bank of the Dnipro River to the left bank, Russian authorities said they were moving 70,000 civilians from the left bank to be “temporarily resettled deep into the Kherson region, as well as to other regions of the Russian Federation,” citing “possible damage to the dam of the Kakhovskaya hydroelectric power station”. • The Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant in southern Ukraine has again been disconnected from the power grid after Russian shelling damaged the remaining high voltage lines, leaving it with just diesel generators, Ukraine nuclear firm Energoatom said Thursday. The plant, in Russian hands but operated by Ukrainian workers, has 15 days’ worth of fuel to run the generators, Energoatom said. • Due to low morale and reluctance to fight, Russian forces have probably started deploying units threatening to shoot their own retreating soldiers, according to the UK Ministry of

	<p>Defence. An intelligence report released early this morning described these Russian units as “barrier troops” or “blocking units” used to compel offensives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oleh Synyehubov, governor of Kharkiv, has said that yesterday in Izium a 69-year-old man was blown up by a mine and hospitalised with moderate injuries. In a message on Telegram, he said that in the last day Ukrainian forces had neutralised “471 explosive objects” in the region. • The Russian ambassador to the UK has claimed UK special forces were involved in a Ukrainian drone attack on Moscow’s Black Sea fleet. Andrei Kelin told Sky News: “We perfectly know about [the] participation of British specialists in [the] training, preparation and execution of violence against the Russian infrastructure and the Russian fleet in the Black Sea. We know that it has been done.” Kelin added: “This is a warning actually that Britain is too deep in this conflict. It means the situation is becoming more and more dangerous.” • Another 107 Ukrainian service personnel were freed from Russian captivity in a prisoner of war swap, Ukraine’s president Volodymyr Zelenskiy confirmed. “Many of them were wounded, and very seriously,” he said in his latest national address. • Russian president Vladimir Putin ordered a one-time payment of 195,000 roubles (£2,800) for contract soldiers and those who have been mobilised to fight in Ukraine, the Kremlin said on Thursday. Last week Moscow said the “partial mobilisation” of 300,000 reservists was over but conceded there had been problems • Volodymyr Zelenskiy has confirmed that he will not attend the G20 summit taking place in two weeks in Bali if Vladimir Putin and the Russian Federation will be participating in the conference. • US embassy officials in Russia visited jailed basketball star Brittney Griner on Thursday. The White House said officials were continuing to work toward a prisoner swap offer with Russia for the release of Griner – but elaborated no further on what that meant, or how soon that could take place.
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	11/05 Day 255 of the Russia invasion
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/nov/05/russia-ukraine-war-at-a-glance-what-we-know-on-day-255-of-the-invasion
GIST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vladimir Putin has said civilians still living in the Russian-annexed province of Kherson must be “evacuated” from the conflict zone, amid suggestions Russian forces may be preparing to abandon the west bank of the Dnipro river. The Russian president’s comments came amid mounting speculation that Moscow would attempt to hold the city of Kherson itself – the largest urban area under Russian occupation – at any cost. • A 24-hour curfew has been imposed in Kherson city, which makes up part of the Ukrainian province Russia annexed in September. • The western military alliance has released footage of its latest nuclear exercise over north-western Europe, with the majority of its exercises being held at least 1,000km from Russia’s borders, over Belgium, the North Sea and the UK. • Russia wants the west to ease restrictions on state agriculture lender Rosselkhozbank to facilitate Russian grain exports, according to four sources familiar with the request. • Xi Jinping and Olaf Scholz have condemned Russia’s threat to use nuclear weapons in Ukraine, with both leaders expressing their desire for the conflict to end. The Chinese president stressed the need for greater cooperation between China and Germany in “times of change and turmoil”, while the German chancellor said Moscow was in danger of “crossing a line” if it used atomic weapons, in what was his first meeting with Xi. • The US announced \$400m worth of additional security assistance for Ukraine, including refurbishing T-72 tanks from the Czech Republic and missiles for Hawk air defences that could be used against Russian drones and cruise missiles. The package brought US military aid for Kyiv to more than \$18.2bn since Russia’s invasion in February. • The US talkshow host David Letterman has travelled to Kyiv to interview Volodymyr Zelenskiy. Netflix made the announcement on Twitter, saying the Ukrainian president will appear in a coming episode of My Next Guest Needs No Introduction with David Letterman.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ukraine's state postal service has issued a commemorative wartime stamp dedicated to the strike on the Crimean Bridge last month which sparked celebrations across the country. Rishi Sunak, the British prime minister, and his Polish counterpart, Mateusz Morawiecki, discussed the situation in Belarus and agreed the need to keep sending a strong message to Russia that intimidation would not work, according to a statement from Sunak's office. Indian IT services company Infosys, from which the British prime minister's wife collects £11.5m in annual dividends, is still operating from Moscow eight months after the company said it was pulling out. The company retains a staffed office and is paying subcontractors in the Russian capital to carry out IT services for a global client, although a spokesperson said they were looking to end that arrangement.
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	11/05 Destructive tornadoes rip thru 3 states
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/nov/05/tornadoes-texas-arkansas-oklahoma
GIST	<p>At least one person has died and dozens more are injured after tornadoes ravaged parts of Texas, Arkansas and Oklahoma.</p> <p>Several twisters caused property damage and physical injury across the various states on Friday. Tornado warnings had still been in effect as of late Friday in parts of Texas, Arkansas, Oklahoma and Missouri.</p> <p>An early report from the National Weather Service Storm Prediction Center found that nine tornadoes formed in Texas, four in Arkansas and one in Oklahoma, CNN reported.</p> <p>The person who died was in south-west Oklahoma, where the city of Idabel was hit with a possible tornado, the local emergency manager, Cody McDaniel, told CNN.</p> <p>McDaniel later added that dozens of people were unaccounted for in the area. A search and rescue effort for the missing later accounted for everyone who had been missing.</p> <p>Nonetheless, more than 60 homes were destroyed and 100 houses "affected" by the fit of extreme weather, officials told local media.</p> <p>"There was total destruction on the south and east sides of Idabel," a local emergency management coordinator, Steven Carter, said to the Texarkana Gazette.</p> <p>Officials are also working to survey damage in the area, which was rife with reports of downed power lines and other extensive destruction.</p> <p>Oklahoma's governor, Kevin Stitt, toured Idabel on Saturday morning, according to the Associated Press. He declared states of emergency – which unlock access to emergency federal funding – for Bryan, McCurtain, Choctaw, and LeFlore counties, according to this office.</p> <p>Injuries were also reported in northern Texas, where at least two people were transported to area hospitals in "critical but stable" condition, a statement posted on social media by the Lamar county sheriff's office confirmed, NBC News reported.</p> <p>Lamar county resident Craig Holcomb spoke to NBC Dallas-Fort Worth on Friday about what he witnessed during the tornado: "I make fun of people, always talking about the train noise, but it sounded just like it ... All you could hear was a loud whistle and I saw debris flying everywhere."</p> <p>Holcomb and his wife were able to shelter in their bathtub.</p> <p>At least 50 homes were also damaged or destroyed in Texas, NBC News reported, with officials promising help from local and state agencies to assist with cleaning up the damage.</p>

	<p>The destruction followed a line of storms which dropped rain and sporadic hail on the Dallas-Fort Worth area before continuing to push eastward.</p> <p>While springtime usually marks the peak of severe weather season for the region including Texas, Arkansas and Oklahoma, tornadoes do occasionally develop in October, November, December and even January, said weather service meteorologist Bianca Garcia in Fort Worth.</p> <p>Garcia said such storms are “not very common”.</p> <p>“But it does happen across our region,” she added.</p>
	Return to Top

HEADLINE	11/05 Can't make ends meet despite 2 jobs
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/nov/05/multiple-jobs-census-data-inflation-us
GIST	<p>Millions of Americans are currently working two or more jobs in order to make ends meet, as global inflation and corporations jacking up prices have sent prices of food, gas, housing, health insurance and other necessities soaring in the past year.</p> <p>Cashe Lewis, 31, of Denver, Colorado works two jobs and is currently trying to find a third job to cover the recent \$200 monthly rent increase to her apartment. She works days as a barista at Starbucks, but claims it's been difficult to get enough hours even with taking extra shifts whenever she can due to scheduling cuts as part of the crackdown on union organizing by management.</p> <p>At night she works at a convenience store because the hours are reliable, and works six days a week, often 16 hours a day.</p> <p>“I’m exhausted all the time,” said Lewis. “On the one day I have off a week, I donate plasma for extra money. I’m literally selling my blood to eat because I have no choice.”</p> <p>Her partner suffers from epilepsy and can’t work full-time hours because of it. Even with insurance, their medication is expensive and she spends about half of a two-week paycheck at Starbucks to cover the health insurance premiums.</p> <p>Over the past five years, she has struggled with homelessness, and was previously fired from her job for sleeping in her car behind her place of employment.</p> <p>“All of my friends and family work multiple jobs as well, just trying to keep our heads above water. Nothing is affordable and the roadblocks set up to keep people in the cycle of poverty benefit the most wealthy members of our society,” added Lewis. “We aren’t living, we’re barely surviving and we have no choice but to keep doing it.”</p> <p>More Americans have been working two or more jobs over the past few decades, according to data from the US census, with women more likely than men to have multiple jobs and multiple jobholders most prevalent among low-wage workers.</p> <p>Laura Richwine of Omaha, Nebraska, works two jobs, one in fraud prevention and the other doing administrative work, and had previously been working three jobs to keep up with hefty medical bills she’s been facing since being hit by a car in 2014.</p> <p>“It’s rough and I barely have any energy to keep up with much else,” said Richwine. “I’ve got a bachelor’s degree and have been working for over 10 years, but up until this year I had never had a job that paid more than \$15 an hour. Many places around me still only offer Nebraska minimum wage, which is \$9 an hour. You can hardly even buy food with that amount.”</p>

Based on data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, [more than 400,000 Americans](#) work two full-time jobs. In September 2022, 4.9% of all [the more than 164 million](#) US workers held two or more job positions, [over 7.7 million workers](#).

Though US census data estimates these rates and numbers to be [much higher](#), at 7.8% in the most recent year where data is available, 2018, [about 13 million workers](#), while BLS data at the time estimated [5.0%](#) of the workforce holding multiple jobs.

Both data sets are considered an [underestimate](#) of the number of multiple jobholders in the US labor market due to [constrictions](#) on what is defined as a multiple jobholder and the lack of data on self-employment, such as gig workers.

An annual [survey](#) sponsored by the Federal Reserve Board estimated an even higher number of workers in multiple jobs, at 16.4% in 2019, about 26.5 million workers.

Many of these workers holding multiple jobs are doing so to try to make ends meet and often working longer than 40 hours a week.

Robert Weaver of Lawrence, Kansas, currently works two jobs as a theater technician and delivery driver, 30 to 35 hours a week at his primary job and about 20 at his second job.

He explained that he works two jobs because he cannot find a single, full-time position in his area that matches with his college degree. Most of his disposable income goes toward paying off credit cards, taxes, surprise bills like car repairs, and medical expenses.

“There isn’t enough money to be able to afford a home or even rent from just one job on your own,” said Weaver. “Everyone is in debt and it’s looking like we will never pay it off, ever.”

Liora Engel, 37, of Vermont, took on two additional jobs, working at a deli and another at a convenience store, earlier this year on top of her full-time job in media, to try to boost her income and cover expenses while going through a divorce.

After working 70-hour weeks, she left her full-time job due to burnout, but still works two jobs while trying to get a side hustle off the ground and limiting her work hours to no more than 50 hours a week.

“It’s kind of like, how much of your soul are you willing to sell in order to be financially independent or to make sure that you can pay your bills?” said Engel.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/05 Russia troops loot Kherson ahead of battle
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/nov/05/ukraine-russian-troops-loot-kherson-as-lines-redrawn-ahead-of-final-battle-for-city
GIST	<p>Things are disappearing in the Ukrainian city of Kherson at a rapid rate. Some are physical objects. Russian troops are taking away ambulances, tractors and stolen private cars. Cultural things are going too: archives, and paintings and sculptures from the art and local lore museums. Even the bones of Catherine the Great’s friend and lover, Grigory Potemkin, have been grubbed up from a crypt in St Catherine’s cathedral and spirited away.</p> <p>Russian soldiers are ferrying this loot across the Dnieper river, to the left bank of the Kherson region. They have also been deporting local citizens under the guise of a humanitarian rescue mission. Others have refused to leave. A round-the-clock curfew has been introduced. Nobody knows how many of Kherson’s 300,000 pre-war inhabitants remain. According to relatives of those still there, the city is mostly empty, its ghostly fate likely to be decided over the next few weeks in a series of bloody battles.</p>

Last Thursday, the Russian flag was taken down from Kherson's neo-classical regional state administration building. The gesture prompted speculation that Moscow was about to abandon the city, which it seized in early March, paving the way for the Ukrainian army's triumphant return. From a military perspective this would make sense, as the Russian contingent is effectively surrounded. At the same time it seems far-fetched [Vladimir Putin](#) and his generals would leave Kherson without a struggle.

Locals are unconvinced by Moscow's machinations. "It's probably a trick," Alyona Lapchuk told the *Observer*. "The Russians are dressing up as civilians and hiding in houses."

Lapchuk, who left Kherson in April, said it was more likely Russian troops were preparing for bitter street-to-street fighting over the autumn and winter. If this strategy failed, the Russian army would probably "destroy" Kherson, in much the same way it flattened Mariupol, killing tens of thousands of civilians, she suggested.

Ukrainian officials were sceptical, too, that Moscow was exiting after nine months. They said newly mobilised Russian troops were creating defensive positions on the outskirts of Kherson, at the same time that checkpoints in neighbouring Chernobaevka and Stepanovka were being abandoned. The disappearance of the Russian flag from buildings was an "informational ruse" to lure Ukrainian forces into a trap, they believe.

"We are getting contradictory information. There is a movement from the right bank to the left bank. It's difficult to understand what exactly is the Russian intention," Serhii Khlan, the deputy head of Kherson's regional council said. There were credible reports Russian soldiers had been going from riverside pier to pier, stealing some boats and sinking others. "Good boats are towed and taken away. What they don't like they chop with an axe," one local said.

Khlan said the occupying Russian authorities had blown up masts, leaving Kherson with no internet or mobile phone connection. Amid this news blackout, Russian officials were urging locals to leave and warning of imminent "terrorist" acts from the advancing Ukrainian military. Moscow also mined the Khakhovka reservoir further upstream, with the apparent intention of flooding Kherson and causing an environmental disaster should it fall into Ukrainian hands.

Since late summer Kyiv's armed forces have counter-attacked. They have liberated almost all of Kharkiv oblast in the north-east of the country, and have pushed into rural parts of the Kherson region, a vast steppe. Russia now controls a shrinking chunk of the western bank of the Dnieper. In September Vladimir Putin "annexed" the provinces of Kherson, Zaporizhzhia, Donetsk and Luhansk. Any retreat from Kherson city would therefore be embarrassing.

Nevertheless, a new fallback "border" of sorts appears to be taking shape, with the Dnieper an impregnable natural barrier against future Ukrainian surges. Over the past week, Russian soldiers have evicted Ukrainians from their homes on the river's left bank. They have then moved in. A defensive line is being established, stretching from the town of Velyka Znamyanka in Zaporizhzhia oblast to Nova Kakhovka in regional Kherson. Russia has shifted its army HQ to the port city of Skadovsk, closer to Crimea.

Telegram posts from the region's villages tell tales of "orcs" (Russian soldiers) occupying private properties. In Hladkivka, in Skadovsk district, they have placed two rows of concrete triangular pyramids alongside a forest, and have been digging trenches and felling trees, locals say. In Nova Mayachka, they have moved into the council building, bringing with them field kitchens and tanks. Soldiers purchase utensils from shops and carry out training exercises, locals add.

According to Natalia Bimbiratyte, a Kherson region volunteer, forcibly evacuated residents are told to take with them only warm clothes, valuables and documents. They are instructed to leave behind chickens, dogs and possessions. "This is a humanitarian catastrophe. Deportations have been going on for two weeks," she said. "Those who have stayed up until now have mostly been pensioners, or people with sick relatives. We don't know how many have gone, and how many are left."

Ukrainian human rights organisations say some forcibly displaced residents have been dumped in freezing sanatoria near Skadovsk. Others have been shipped to Russia's Krasnodar region, an intermediate point in a journey that ends in Siberia, they claim. Several hundred children sent by Kherson parents to Russian summer schools have not been returned, their location unknown. And 2,000 people are currently in camps in the Crimean city of Yevpatoria, rights groups report, citing Telegram messages.

The Ukrainian army, meanwhile, is closing in on Kherson. It has used long-range US-supplied artillery to wipe out a Russian pontoon crossing over the Dnieper, next to the city's already cratered Antonivskyi bridge. The goal is to destroy the Russian war machine's logistics and supply chain, rendering its presence inside Kherson unviable. There have been setbacks too. An attempt to break through Russian defences south of the village of Davydiv Brid was a costly wipeout, with many Ukrainian soldiers killed. With the exception of a handful of collaborators, most Kherson residents are pro-Ukrainian. "Kherson is hell. People are kidnapped and tortured," Lapchuk, who ran a garage business in the city, said.

She added: "They have the same algorithm. People are beaten up badly, their ribs are broken and then they are raped. Right now there is forced deportation from Kherson. The world needs to know. Russia is destroying Ukraine and Ukrainian people."

Lapchuk spoke from terrible personal experience. In late March her husband Vitaly – a police colonel and member of Kherson's territorial defence service – went out with a friend to deliver humanitarian supplies. Russian troops brought him back some hours later, covered in blood, his jaw bruised and nose broken. "They said that we were terrorists," Lapchuk recalled. The soldiers searched the flat and arrested her, her husband and their teenage son.

They were taken to a police station, with bags over their heads. "They said we were Nazis who hated Russians. I said this was impossible since I was a Russian speaker and Jewish. It was stupid," Lapchuk said.

She said she grew hysterical when, after an initial "interrogation", the soldiers took Vitaly to a basement torture chamber. "They told me he was a 'terrorist' who had confessed and would be tried in Russia," she said.

Lapchuk and her son were released that night. She returned home to discover someone had fired a rocket in the living room, blowing off the roof and windows. All the other buildings nearby were intact. She sent desperate texts to her husband's phone. An FSB intelligence officer answered them, she said, pretending to be Vitaly. She continued to hope he was alive, and might be exchanged as a prisoner of war.

The grisly truth emerged in late May when a local man went swimming in the Dnieper river for crayfish. He spotted a badly decomposed body. A weight had been attached to its legs, which were tied together. A forensic doctor rang Lapchuk and she was able to identify Vitaly by a visible spot on his left forearm. "I was very fortunate to escape Kherson. It was too dangerous to go back for my husband's funeral," she said, speaking last week in Kyiv.

Crying, she described Vitaly as an educated man with a PhD in psychology who taught policeman at Kherson's academy. She recalled their final moments together. "I didn't realise it at the time. I looked into my husband's eyes as they put bags over our heads and said: 'We will survive all this'. It was the last time I saw him."

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/04 Impoverished NKorea funds testing spree
SOURCE	https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/nov/4/how-impoverished-north-korea-finances-testing-spre/
GIST	SEOUL, South Korea — North Korea's recent barrage of missile tests, including Wednesday's record of at least 23 launches, is raising an important question about its weapons program: How does the impoverished country pay for the seemingly endless tests?

While some experts say each North Korean launch could cost \$2 million to \$10 million, others say there is no way to estimate accurately given the North's extremely secretive nature. They say North Korea likely manufactures weapons at a much cheaper cost than other countries because of free labor and possible clandestine Chinese and Russian support.

Whichever is correct, there are no signs that North Korea's economic hardships are slowing its weapons tests. Instead, its testing spree signals that leader Kim Jong Un is determined to show he has the ability to launch nuclear strikes on South Korea and the United States in order to wrest future concessions.

Here is a look at the financial dimensions of [North Korea's](#) missile tests.

HOW MUCH DOES EACH TEST COST?

North Korea launched at least 23 missiles on Wednesday and six more on Thursday, adding to its already record-breaking pace of weapons tests this year. Many were nuclear-capable ballistic missiles designed to destroy South Korean and U.S. targets.

They likely include a developmental Hwasong-17 intercontinental ballistic missile, surface-to-air missiles and a variety of short-range ballistic missiles. North Korea has a reputation for frequent missile tests, but it has never launched that many missiles in a single day.

Soo Kim, a security analyst at the California-based RAND Corporation, said the cost of a North Korean missile test could range between several million dollars to \$10 million, which would be lower than similar tests in other countries, partly because North Korean labor is cheap.

Bruce Bennet, another expert at the RAND Corporation, told Radio Free Asia that the short-range missiles Wednesday cost between \$2 million to \$3 million each and the total cost for the day was somewhere between \$50 million and \$75 million. RFA said the maximum estimate is about the amount of money that North Korea spent to import rice from China in 2019 to cover grain shortages that year.

Lee Illwoo, an expert with the Korea Defense Network in South Korea, said it's impossible for outsiders to accurately estimate weapons production costs in North Korea. "There are no ways for us to find at what cost North Korea produces certain weapons parts. They could have manufactured them by themselves, or China might have given them for free or at an extremely cheap price," he said.

In a report to the office of South Korean lawmaker Shin Won-sik in September, the state-run Korea Institute for Defense Analyses in Seoul said North Korea was estimated to have spent up to \$1.6 billion on its nuclear program since the 1970s. The report used analyses of nuclear development programs in other countries. Some observers cautioned against the use of foreign data because the North Korean government doesn't have to pay for labor or land.

HOW ARE THE LAUNCHES FUNDED?

North Korea's economic difficulties have worsened because of COVID-19, but there have been no reports of substantial social unrest or food shortages.

Its weapons development is being driven by a Soviet-style party-military complex in which the party leadership surrounding Kim Jong Un exercises full control over defense industries and faces little budgetary constraint in concentrating national resources on arms development, said Hong Min, an analyst at Seoul's Korea Institute for National Unification.

In addition to the record number of missile tests this year, there are also signs that North Korea is expanding its munition facilities in a possible attempt to mass-produce newly developed weapons, Hong said.

Soo Kim, the RAND Corporation analyst, said it is crucial to track how North Korea is financing its weapons programs despite U.S.-led economic sanctions and its own self-imposed isolation.

“This is where sanctions-violating activities, including (North Korea’s) recent foray into cybercrime and cryptocurrency hacking, comes into play,” she said. “And of course, having witting partners in Beijing and Moscow aid in sanctions violations also helps the regime’s weapons development prosper.”

Hong said Russia’s war in Ukraine appears to have opened a new opportunity for North Korea amid U.S. accusations that the North is covertly shipping a “significant” number of artillery shells to Russia. Hong said in return North Korea may seek Russian technology transfers and supplies needed to expand its military capabilities.

WHAT DOES NORTH KOREA GAIN?

Each of North Korea’s missile and nuclear tests gives its scientists “precious data” on weapons development and also helps cement Kim Jong Un’s leadership while rattling the South Korea-U.S. alliance, said Kim Taewoo, former head of Seoul’s Korea Institute for National Unification.

“Some people say we should let North Korea keep firing missiles toward the sea so that they would use up their resources. But I would say that is an extremely naive opinion,” he said.

South Korean media reported that the Hwasong-17 launch on Thursday ended in failure because it didn’t follow a normal flight and crashed into the ocean after a stage separation. In an earlier test launch in March, the Hwasong-17 exploded soon after liftoff.

“The missile is under development. So it’s not the time to call its launch ‘a failure’ and laugh at it,” said Lee, the Korea Defense Network expert. “This time, the missile had a stage separation, and I think they’ve achieved quite a big technological progress.”

North Korea has argued its missile tests are meant as a warning against a series of U.S-South Korean joint military exercises that it views as an invasion rehearsal. Given that, North Korea’s testing activities are likely to continue since Washington and Seoul regularly conduct drills.

North Korea is estimated to have about 1,000 ballistic missiles, more than enough for it to continue its pressure campaign through the 2024 U.S. presidential election to try to win sanctions relief and other concessions, said Go Myong-hyun, an analyst at Seoul’s Asan Institute for Policy Studies.

“What North Korea wants to demonstrate before 2024 is that its nuclear weapons arsenal is very advanced, has been completed and represents a much more significant threat than before,” Go said. “It’s crucial for them to maintain that threat perception with the United States and they aren’t suddenly going to quiet down.”

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/05 China: no change to ‘zero-Covid’ policy
SOURCE	https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/nov/5/chinese-officials-signal-no-change-to-zero-covid-p/
GIST	<p>BEIJING — Chinese health officials gave no indication Saturday of any relaxation of COVID-19 restrictions, following several days of speculation that the government was considering changes to a “zero-COVID” approach that has stymied economic growth and disrupted daily life.</p> <p>The officials said at a news conference that they would “unswervingly” stick to the policy, which seeks to stop cases from coming into the country and snuff out outbreaks as they are uncovered.</p> <p>The announcement was not a surprise and doesn’t preclude the possibility that discussions are taking place behind closed doors. But there has been no official confirmation of talks, and most analysts believe any change will be gradual with major easing unlikely until sometime next year.</p> <p>The speculation rallied stock markets in China this week, with investors as well as the public latching onto any hints of possible change. The death of a 3-year-old boy in a quarantined residential compound fueled</p>

growing discontent with the anti-virus controls, which are increasingly out of step with the rest of the world.

Anyone entering China must quarantine at a designated hotel for seven to 10 days. People in the country line up several times a week to get a virus test at outdoor booths, to meet a requirement for a negative result within the last 72 hours to enter office buildings, shopping malls, restaurants, parks and other public places.

Tuo Jia, a National Health Commission official, acknowledged complaints in some cities about the zealous enforcement of the zero-COVID policy and said that local authorities need to balance epidemic prevention with economic development.

“We must conduct prevention and control resolutely, decisively, scientifically and accurately, and resolutely clean up and stop all forms of simplification, a one-size-fits-all approach and excessive local measures,” she said.

Scattered outbreaks across the country continue to prompt travel restrictions and lockdowns. China on Saturday reported identifying about 3,500 new cases the previous day, including about 3,000 who tested positive despite not having any COVID-19 symptoms.

In the city of Guangzhou in the southeast, Haizhu district suspended bus and subway service for three days and urged residents to stay home as it conducts mass testing of its 1.8 million people. One person per household is allowed out each day to shop for necessities.

Restrictions are also in place in parts of the Inner Mongolia region in the north and the Xinjiang region in the west, where 43 new high-risk areas were designated Saturday in Urumqi, the regional capital.

Wang Guiqiang, director of the infectious disease department at Peking University First Hospital, told the news conference that the vaccination rate for people above 80 years old needs to be raised. China does not have a vaccine mandate.

A health official said that 90% of the population is fully vaccinated, including 86% percent of those above 60, but did not provide a figure for those above 80.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, who made a one-day visit to Beijing on Friday, told reporters that China had agreed to approve the German-developed Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for foreigners and that he hoped its use would be expanded to the Chinese public.

It wasn't clear when the approval would come. China has approved only domestic vaccines so far, which use an older technology that has typically proven less effective at preventing the spread of the disease than the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/05 Border numbers worsened in October
SOURCE	https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/nov/5/border-numbers-worsened-october-historic-number-go/
GIST	<p>Border Patrol agents apprehended nearly 210,000 illegal immigrants at the southern border in October, according to preliminary numbers obtained by the Federation for American Immigration Reform that show yet another rise in the level of chaos along the U.S.-Mexico boundary.</p> <p>Agents tallied another 86,796 “known gotaways” — migrants that they spotted crossing, and know they weren’t able to apprehend. That’s believed to be the highest number ever detected and paints an even grimmer picture of what’s going on at the border.</p> <p>In parts of Arizona, agents have reported missing roughly as many migrants as they managed to catch.</p>

The 209,664 illegal border jumpers is up more than 30% compared to October 2021, when agents tallied 159,113 apprehensions. And it trounces the Trump years, when roughly 69,000 were caught in October 2020, and just 35,000 were nabbed in October 2019.

The numbers are labeled preliminary. Homeland Security usually waits until the middle of the month — or later — to release its data.

FAIR, which obtained the numbers, said voters deserved to see it now.

“Secretary [Alejandro] Mayorkas only releases border numbers extremely late because he doesn’t want the American people to see that he has created a lawless, greased-up turnstile into the United States. These are numbers the American people have a right to see in a timely manner, and we’re here to help,” said R.J. Hauman, director of government relations at FAIR.

He said a new Congress should demand accountability from the secretary.

“Secretary Mayorkas has actively undermined our national security, while encouraging and facilitating the violation of laws he swore to uphold. The end result? The worst border crisis in American history,” Mr. Hauman said. “If he is not fired or forced to resign in shame, he must be brought up on impeachment charges in the next Congress.”

The Times has reached out to Customs and Border Protection for comment.

The border data showed agents tallied 27 dead migrants.

Rep. Chip Roy, Texas Republican, tweeted out some of the numbers on Friday, pointing to a significant surge of migrants to the El Paso region of the border.

Agents there reported catching 53,204 illegal border crossers and more than 20,000 others known to have evaded capture.

CBP released the September border numbers — which covered all of fiscal year 2023 — just before midnight on Friday, Oct. 21.

Agents reported nabbing 207,597 illegal immigrants that month.

At the time, CBP Commissioner Chris Magnus insisted they were making progress after adopting one of the Trump administration’s get-tough approaches and applying it to Venezuelans, who had been surging across the border at unprecedented levels.

He said the approach, which combined Trump-style expulsions with a new program to welcome some Venezuelans legally, had cut numbers by 80% in the first week.

It’s not clear from the new numbers whether that trend continued.

The numbers also don’t reveal how many of the more than 200,000 people were caught and released into the U.S., though based on past trends the figure is likely to be more than half of those.

That’s in addition to the 86,796 gotaways.

Those are particularly worrisome to border agents because, unlike ones that are caught, the gotaways represent unknowns. Agents believe terrorism suspects, criminals and other high-value targets are among those sneaking through.

[Return to Top](#)

SOURCE	https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/nov/5/terror-weapon-with-starring-role-in-ukraine-irans/
GIST	<p>Iran is poised to emerge from the Russia-Ukraine war as a much more dangerous adversary, analysts and national security insiders warn, as its military drone program is transforming into a lethal “terror weapon” that could eventually challenge some of the world’s most advanced defensive systems.</p> <p>For the regime in Tehran, Russia’s growing reliance on Iranian-made drones for its fall aerial campaign in Ukraine carries a host of benefits, including the deepening of diplomatic and military ties between the two countries at a time when Iran is increasingly isolated from the West.</p> <p>But specialists say there’s a more troubling motivation, one that could carry very real ramifications for the national security of the U.S. and its allies, including Israel. Russia’s battlefield use of Iranian-made Shahed-136 drones and other craft is giving Tehran real-time information on how its unmanned systems perform in a combat zone, which defensive systems they’re able to defeat, and what their biggest weaknesses appear to be. That knowledge will guide Iran’s effort to refine its drones, making them even more effective and deadly in the future.</p> <p>“While the U.S. and NATO will reap the benefits of the Ukrainian military’s experience, so, too, will Iran. Iranians operating the drones from Crimea have front-row seats and can report back which drone attacks have penetrated which defenses, and where gaps in any defense systems may exist,” Katherine Zimmerman, a resident fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, wrote in a recent piece for The Hill. “Iran’s next generation of drones will be that much more difficult to stop.”</p> <p>Wars have an ideal laboratory for refining and improving the capabilities of the soldiers and weaponry involved, from Nazi Germany’s lessons learned aiding Franco’s forces in the Spanish Civil War in the 1930s to the experience and know-how Russia’s own forces gained fighting in support of the Bashar Assad regime in Syria for the past decade.</p> <p>Ms. Zimmerman and other scholars are now sounding the alarm about the long-term repercussions of the Iran-Russia drone nexus in Ukraine and beyond.</p> <p>“The variety of ways in which the Ukrainian military has thwarted Russian drone attacks is a testament to the array of defenses at its disposal,” she said. “But it also speaks to the ad hoc nature of the response, revealing vulnerabilities to increasingly sophisticated — and field-tested — Iranian technology, and it exposes an asymmetry in defending against the threat.”</p> <p>Indeed, the Ukrainian military’s ability to defeat Iranian drones is impressive. Ukrainian forces have shot down an estimated 70% of the hundreds of the low-flying, relatively slow Shahed 136 and 131 drones deployed by Russian troops and their Iranian allies in the fight so far, using a combination of missiles, machine-gun fire, fighter jets and other methods.</p> <p>The Ukrainian success rate, while impressive, is only part of the story. Specialists warn that the Russian and Iranian militaries have learned that using swarms of Shahed drones — which cost as little as \$20,000 a piece and are controlled via GPS systems — can overwhelm even the best of defenses.</p> <p>Even if the majority of those drones are shot down, the survivors can carry out “suicide” attacks on Ukrainian targets, including energy infrastructure such as electrical power stations and water treatment facilities. The Shahed drones are particularly well-suited for that mission, according to Samuel Bendett, a senior fellow at the Center for a New American Security who is closely tracking daily battlefield developments in Ukraine.</p> <p>“Russia fields this technology against stationary targets,” he said earlier this week at a Brookings Institution event focused on battlefield technology on display in Ukraine.</p> <p>The Iranian drones, Mr. Bendett said, “are actually good at hitting stationary targets, not so much mobile targets that can maneuver quickly away from the original position.”</p>

“But this is also a very capable terror weapon, since Russia can send waves of the Shahed 136 and 131 drones against Ukrainian civilian infrastructure targets such as electrical power stations and heating power stations and other elements of infrastructure in order to terrorize and force the Ukrainian population and government to come to terms,” he said.

Still, analysts stress that the Shahed drones are by no means a game-changer for the Russian military and are highly unlikely to be a difference-maker in the overall trajectory of the war. And, for the record, Iranian officials continue to deny accounts of major shipments of arms and drones to Russia, insisting Tehran remains strictly neutral in the nearly nine-month war and that the U.S. and Ukraine are falsely accusing it of backing the Kremlin.

For the first time Saturday, a top Iranian official acknowledged Tehran had supplied the Russian military with drones, but insisted all shipments had been made well before the Feb. 24 invasion of Ukraine.

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian said a “small number” of drones had been supplied to Russia a few months before the war began, Iran’s state-controlled IRNA news service reported. But he again denied any drone shipments had been made after the war started and rejected other reports that Iran had sold powerful missiles to the Kremlin as well.

“This fuss made by some Western countries that Iran has provided missiles and drones to Russia to help the war in Ukraine, the missile part is completely wrong,” the official IRNA news agency quoted him as saying. “The drone part is true and we provided Russia a small number of drones months before the Ukraine war.”

Overwhelming defenses

The larger Shahed-136 is believed to have a range of at least about 620 miles, meaning the craft can be used virtually anywhere in Ukraine after being launched from the Crimean peninsula, where U.S. officials say Iranian military instructors are on the ground to teach Russian fighters how to use the craft.

The smaller Shahed-131 has a shorter range but is highly effective in more limited missions. Russian troops are able to launch the craft quickly and with little warning.

“The Shahed-136 can be fired from a mobile, truck-mounted launcher, making it difficult to detect,” John Hardie and Ryan Brobst, scholars with the think tank Foundation for Defense of Democracies, wrote in a recent analysis.

“The loitering munition is also difficult to detect by radar, thanks to its small size, low altitude and speed, and ability to change direction in flight and attack weak spots in air defense coverage,” they wrote. “The Ukrainians have achieved some success in downing them with surface-to-air missiles and even small-arms fire. But in sufficient numbers, the Shahed-136 can overwhelm Ukrainian air defenses, particularly at night, when Ukrainian troops have a harder time [tracking] the munition.”

The Kremlin appears to be doubling down on its strategy, as it is reportedly planning to buy thousands more Shahed drones from the Iranian government. Such a massive purchase will help backfill depleted Russian wartime supplies, which have dwindled rapidly as its forces have struggled to hold their ground against a spirited Ukrainian counterattack in the south and east.

For Iran, that amount of real-world battlefield experience is an important step forward for its drone program. Iranian proxies had already employed drones in Yemen, where Iran-backed Houthi rebels are battling government forces in a bloody civil war. Iran-backed militias in Iraq and Syria also have used drones to target U.S. forces stationed in both countries.

Iranian drones also appear to have been behind a 2019 attack on Saudi Arabian oil fields carried out by Houthi rebels.

	<p>But none of those instances have given Tehran the depth of information and invaluable experience as the Russia-Ukraine war.</p> <p>In a future conflict, whether it be versus the U.S. or a regional adversary, Iran will almost surely be more dangerous thanks to that experience.</p> <p>“Iran’s drone threat is rising, and it’s only a matter of time until the U.S. military, not the Ukrainians, will need to defend against it,” said Ms. Zimmerman, the AEI analyst.</p>
	Return to Top

HEADLINE	11/04 New Covid variants are circulating
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/article/covid-variants-nightmare.html
GIST	<p>As it gets colder and more people move their activities indoors, the recent decline in Covid-19 cases across the United States has started to level off. Coronavirus-related hospitalizations are ticking up in a number of states, including Arizona, Indiana, Illinois, Nevada, Nebraska, Oklahoma, South Dakota and Wisconsin. And there have been a variety of unnerving headlines about the immune evasion and increased transmissibility of the next round of coronavirus subvariants.</p> <p>At least half a dozen versions of the virus are competing to become the next dominant strain in the United States, but they are part of the same family tree. “They are all offspring of Omicron,” said Dr. Albert Ko, a physician and epidemiologist at the Yale School of Public Health. Though each subvariant has slightly different mutations, none of them seem to be creating significant waves just yet, the way the Delta and Omicron variants did when they first appeared, Dr. Ko said.</p> <p>Here’s what experts know so far about the new subvariants and what their mutations may mean for repeat infections, symptoms, case spikes and treatment options.</p> <p>Which subvariants are circulating right now? And what is the ‘nightmare variant’?</p> <p>According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the BA.5 subvariant, which powered the summertime Covid-19 surge, still causes just under half of infections across the country. But two other subvariants are growing rapidly and are expected to outcompete BA.5 very soon: BQ.1 and BQ.1.1.</p> <p>As of last Friday, BQ.1 accounted for 14 percent of Covid-19 infections in the United States, while BQ.1.1 accounted for 13.1 percent. Another variant, called BA.4.6, has also gained some ground since August. It now accounts for 9.6 percent of cases.</p> <p>BF.7, BA.5.2.6, BA.2.75 and a number of other variants are also jockeying for position in the United States, while another variant called XBB has made headlines for its role in a Covid-19 case surge in Singapore. Some reports have gone so far as to call XBB the “nightmare variant,” even though the number of cases and hospital admissions associated with it was already significantly down by Oct. 29.</p> <p>The case counts and locations of each subvariant are important mainly for close observers of the pandemic, who are trying to track how well the subvariants evade immune protections, how much they will circulate in a community and how severe they can be for those infected.</p> <p>How worried should I be about these new subvariants?</p> <p>The evolution of new coronavirus variants is nothing new. “We’ve dealt with this before, with influenza, for example,” Dr. Ko said. “Viruses and pathogens are constantly trying to adapt and escape the immune pressure that we pose to them.”</p> <p>With new, more immune-evasive subvariants, healthy adults are more likely to be infected even after vaccination or after a previous infection with a different variant. Indeed, a few preprint studies indicate that prior infection or vaccination might not produce antibodies that protect strongly against the new subvariants in lab experiments.</p>

But other parts of the immune system can come to our defense, said Dr. Otto Yang, an infectious disease physician and immunology researcher at the University of California, Los Angeles David Geffen School of Medicine.

“The mutations defining these new variants are clustered in and around a key area for antibody interactions, but the overall spike sequence is not really changed enough to affect T cells that recognize any part of the sequence, and they are what prevent severe illness,” Dr. Yang said. “People who are up to date on their vaccines and who get treatment early with Paxlovid or with remdesivir are going to do fine for the most part.” ([Paxlovid is an oral antiviral medication](#), and [remdesivir is an injectable antiviral](#).)

Most experts are not concerned with the possibility of new subvariants causing mild illness. “If we see that deaths are reduced and if serious illness and hospitalizations are reduced, even if people do get infected, that’s still a big success,” said Michael Osterholm, an epidemiologist and the director of the Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy at the University of Minnesota.

Immune evasion is a bigger concern for people who are immunocompromised or who don’t mount a strong immune response to vaccines. That includes people who have had stem cell or solid organ transplants, people receiving cancer treatments, people with autoimmune diseases and people who need immune-suppressive medication for [various medical conditions](#), said Dr. Alpana Waghmare, an infectious disease expert at Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center.

Immunocompromised people often rely on preventive shots like [Evusheld](#) and intravenous Covid treatments like [bebtelovimab](#), which are made from monoclonal antibodies and can fill in holes in the protection these patients may have from vaccines, Dr. Waghmare said. But the monoclonal antibody treatments are designed to act on one particular piece of the virus; if that piece is altered in the newer subvariants, these treatments may no longer be effective.

“That’s the concern for most clinicians, that we will lose this set of tools in our toolbox to fight Covid,” Dr. Waghmare said. As a result, immunocompromised people may have to deal with more severe disease without the option for monoclonal antibody treatment, even if other antiviral treatments will still keep overall deaths from increasing in this group.

What are the symptoms of a Covid-19 infection with one of the new subvariants?

There is no evidence yet to suggest that people who are infected with BQ.1, BQ.1.1 or any of the other subvariants experience any new or unusual symptoms, or that their illness is more severe than what we’ve seen with previous Omicron variants, Dr. Waghmare said.

The most common symptoms still include a mild runny nose, headache and sore throat. These could precede a positive Covid test, and symptoms could be mild or moderately bad for the duration of the illness. “It’s hard to tell whether the reduced severity we’re seeing is due to the actual variant or because people are more protected because they’ve either had the vaccine or seen an infection before,” Dr. Waghmare said.

How can I protect myself against the virus?

The best thing most people can do to protect themselves in the winter is to be vaccinated and boosted. In particular, those who are at high risk, as well as those who have not had a booster or a Covid infection in the last four to six months, should make a plan to get a shot, Dr. Yang said. Some experts recommend getting a booster even sooner.

[One study from Pfizer](#) suggests that the [updated bivalent booster](#), which became available in September, produces a better antibody response against BA.5 for people over age 55 than the previously available booster. Other independent data indicates the shot may not offer much additional benefit to relatively young and healthy people who have already received four doses of the vaccine. The bivalent booster can train your immune system to recognize the original virus from 2020 as well as the BA.5 Omicron variant. But it remains to be seen how well antibodies from the bivalent shot may work against newer subvariants like BQ.1 and BQ.1.1, which have already diverged from BA.5.

Antibodies aside, the T cell protection that arises from the booster should still be able to protect you against severe illness if you do get infected, Dr. Yang said. According to some studies from Israel, T cell protection appears to start waning around six months, so you could consider getting another shot if it has been longer than that, even if you are young and healthy.

People who are at high risk of severe Covid-19 or have vulnerable family members should also consider masking, avoiding crowded indoor venues and asking others about Covid symptoms or exposures if they [go to gatherings](#) during the holiday season. They should also test frequently and get antiviral medication such as Paxlovid early on if a test comes back positive, Dr. Waghmare said.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/04 Russia ill-trained conscripts sent to combat
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/04/world/europe/russia-ukraine-conscripts-combat.html
GIST	<p>KYIV, Ukraine — Russia is funneling newly drafted conscripts with little training to the front line in Ukraine’s east, while mounting intensified but ineffective attacks and suffering heavy casualties, according to the Ukrainian military and Western analysts.</p> <p>Grisly videos of Russian infantry in poorly prepared positions being struck by artillery have partly supported those assertions, as has reporting in Russian news media of mobilized soldiers telling relatives about high casualty rates. The videos, filmed by Ukrainian drones, have not been independently verified, and their exact locations could not be determined.</p> <p>President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia announced on Friday that the draft he ordered on Sept. 21, a chaotic effort that swept up some men who should have been exempt, had added 318,000 troops to Russia’s military, with 49,000 of them already in combat. But he did not acknowledge the widespread complaints of inadequate training and equipment, with some soldiers being killed within days of deployment.</p> <p>Attention has shifted recently to the southern front, where Ukrainian forces are slowly closing in on the Russian-held city of Kherson, but the Kremlin is also pouring more troops into the eastern Donbas region, trying to halt recent Ukrainian advances while rebuilding ground forces that have been decimated by more than eight months of war.</p> <p>Gen. Valeriy Zaluzhnyi, the commander of the Ukrainian military, said in a statement posted on the Telegram messaging app on Thursday that Russian forces had tripled the intensity of their attacks along some parts of the front and were staging up to 80 assaults per day. He did not specify a time frame or where the attacks were coming from, nor did he say how large they were; some may be small, probing attacks, looking for points of weakness in the Ukrainian lines.</p> <p>General Zaluzhnyi said that in a phone call he had told Gen. Christopher G. Cavoli of the United States, the supreme allied commander in Europe, that “thanks to the courage and skills of our warriors,” Ukrainians were beating back the assaults.</p> <p>An assessment released on Thursday by the Institute for the Study of War, a Washington-based analysis group, agreed that Russia had not gained ground in the Donbas. Instead, it said, Moscow’s forces were “wasting the fresh supply of mobilized personnel on marginal gains” by attacking before they had massed sufficient soldiers to ensure success.</p> <p>“Russian forces would likely have had more success in such offensive operations if they had waited until enough mobilized personnel had arrived to amass a force large enough to overcome Ukrainian defenses,” the institute said.</p> <p>The Russian attacks have been directed at several towns and villages, including Bakhmut and Avdiivka. The Ukrainian National Police said that all civilians had been evacuated from one frontline town, Marinka, a suburb of the city of Donetsk. At the same time, the Ukrainian military said it had been able to cut off</p>

Russia's use of a key road supplying its forces in the town of Kreminna, threatening Russia's ability to hold it.

The scale of Russian losses on the ground is uncertain — as is the number of Ukrainian casualties. The Institute for the Study of War said Russia “impaled” its ill-prepared units on well dug-in Ukrainian defensive positions. The Ukrainian military's estimates of Russian casualties, which are seen as inflated, have increased sharply; on Friday, the military said more than 800 Russian soldiers had been wounded or killed over the previous 24 hours.

In Kherson, the Russian occupation administration that has controlled the city since February has largely withdrawn from it after pillaging municipal resources, and some military units have also pulled back, regrouping on the opposite, eastern bank of the Dnipro River. But Ukrainian military intelligence says that Russia has deployed about 40,000 soldiers to the western bank to stop the Ukrainian military from reclaiming the city.

Russian officials have ordered civilians out of Kherson, but an unknown number remain, and Kirill Stremousov, a top Russian proxy official in the region, labeled those who stayed behind Ukrainian sympathizers who would face prosecution. Analysts say Russian authorities fear that, in a battle for control of the city, local residents could provide vital intelligence to Ukrainian forces.

Speaking in Moscow on Friday, Mr. Putin said that the city must be evacuated, couching his comments as concern for the residents' safety, though his forces have killed numerous civilians in attacks across Ukraine.

“Those who live in Kherson must now be removed from the zone of the most dangerous hostilities,” he said in remarks broadcast on state television. “The civilian population should not suffer from shellings, from the offensive, counteroffensive and other measures related to military operations.”

He was marking Unity Day, a national holiday that commemorates an uprising that expelled Polish-Lithuanian occupiers from Moscow in 1612. The holiday was celebrated before the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution and resurrected in 2005 by Mr. Putin, who recognizes it each year by laying flowers at a statue in Red Square that was erected to glorify the leaders of the uprising.

The symbolism meshes neatly with the justification he offers for invading Ukraine — that Russia is fighting for its survival against aggressors from the West.

The Pentagon announced on Friday that the United States was sending another \$400 million worth of military aid to Ukraine, bringing the total since Russia invaded on Feb. 24 to \$18.9 billion. The latest package includes half the cost of overhauling 90 T-72B tanks supplied by the Czech Republic, with the Netherlands covering the other half.

It also includes 1,100 Phoenix Ghost explosive drones, 40 armored patrol boats and funding to upgrade more lightly armored vehicles and air defense systems.

The Defense Department said it was also setting up a new, 300-person command based in Germany specifically to oversee how the United States and its allies train and equip the Ukrainian military, signaling a long-term commitment. It replaces a system improvised during the war under a previously existing command.

Some Republican lawmakers have questioned the continued heavy spending on Ukraine's defense. But President Biden's national security adviser, Jake Sullivan, offered assurances to Ukrainians nervously watching the U.S. midterm elections that American support would not wane, no matter the outcome of the vote.

“I'm confident U.S. support for Ukraine will be unwavering and unflinching,” Mr. Sullivan said at a news conference in Kyiv, where he met with President Volodymyr Zelensky and other top Ukrainian officials.

	<p>“Under any scenario,” Mr. Sullivan said, “the president is committed to working on a bipartisan basis” to ensure that Ukraine’s military will not run short of weaponry.</p> <p>After the news conference, he and the U.S. ambassador to Ukraine, Bridget A. Brink, along with other officials, waited for several minutes in a darkened corridor of the presidential office because an air raid alert had sounded. Security services later gave the clear for the American officials to leave through the open courtyard.</p> <p>Foreign ministers of the Group of 7 wealthy democracies said after a two-day meeting in Münster, Germany, that they had agreed to work together to help Kyiv rebuild vital civilian infrastructure that had been damaged or destroyed, and that they had discussed supplying Ukraine with more air defense systems.</p>
	Return to Top

HEADLINE	11/05 NKorea launches more ballistic missiles
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/05/world/asia/north-korea-missiles-us-bombers.html
GIST	<p>SEOUL — North Korea fired four short-range ballistic missiles off its west coast on Saturday morning, and hours later two American B-1B supersonic strategic bombers flew over the Korean Peninsula in the first deployment of its kind since 2017.</p> <p>North Korea has launched as many as 85 missiles this year, more than in any previous year, including 23 fired on Wednesday alone. It not only tested a new intercontinental ballistic missile under development, but also fired a flurry of short-range missiles to counter the United States and South Korea as the allies stepped up joint military drills.</p> <p>One such drill, code-named Vigilant Storm, which involved about 240 warplanes from both allies, ended on Saturday after a six-day run. The drill was scheduled to end on Friday, but was extended a day after North Korea launched an ICBM on Thursday.</p> <p>The four short-range ballistic missiles on Saturday flew 81 miles, according to the South Korean military. North Korea has typically protested joint military drills by the United States and South Korea, accusing them of preparing to invade, and cited them as a reason that it was building its nuclear arsenal.</p> <p>But this year, its reaction has been more aggressive.</p> <p>It has fired a burst of missiles during such joint military drills by the allies, launching them from across North Korea. By sending them from many different locations, even from an underwater silo, the North sought to demonstrate that it could thwart the allies’ missile defense system, military experts said.</p> <p>Although the North Korean air force is chronically short of fuel and spare parts, it also sent up as many as 150 planes in an exercise last month, according to state-run North Korean news media. Three times since early last month, North Korean military aircraft have flown close enough to the border with South Korea for the South to scramble its own fighter jets.</p> <p>North Korea has also fired hundreds of artillery shells and rockets into buffer zones north of the inter-Korean maritime borders that the two Koreas created when their leaders met in 2018. Both sides had agreed, as a tension-reducing step, not to fire rockets and artillery there.</p> <p>North Korea may have gained a sense of empowerment from its growing nuclear arsenal, becoming increasingly daring in its military provocations, analysts said.</p> <p>For their part, South Korea and the United States demonstrated their own combined air power superiority this past week, with warplanes conducting a record 1,600 sorties during the Vigilant Storm exercise.</p>

On Saturday, two nuclear-capable B-1B Lancer bombers, taking off from Guam, the U.S. territory in the West Pacific, flew over South Korea, flanked by four South Korean F-35A fighter jets and four American F-16 jets, according to the South Korean military. The United States last deployed B-1B bombers over South Korea in 2017, when North Korea conducted its last nuclear test, as well as test-firing its first ICBMs.

The North Koreans are particularly sensitive about long-range American bombers over South Korea, after U.S. aerial bombings leveled their country to ashes during the Korean War in the 1950s.

Sending the B-1Bs, which had been scheduled in advance of North Korea's Saturday morning missile launch, was part of Washington's commitment to its so-called extended deterrence, including deployment of nuclear-capable military forces, to help defend South Korea against the North's growing nuclear and missile threat.

Jitters over the North Korean nuclear arsenal have been rising in South Korea since North Korea adopted a more aggressive nuclear doctrine, openly declaring that it would use nuclear weapons if threatened. It has also conducted military exercises that it said involved the mock launching of nuclear missiles at South Korea.

North Korea's leader, Kim Jong-un, views expanding his nuclear and missile force as essential to ensuring his regime's security, increasing his leverage in future arms control talks with Washington and tipping the balance of military power between North and South Korea in the North's favor, according to analysts.

When Defense Secretary Lloyd J. Austin III met his South Korean counterpart, Lee Jong-sup, in Washington this past week, he warned that "any nuclear attack" by the North would "result in the end of the Kim regime," according to a joint statement.

But North Korea vowed to respond to the "hostile" United States and South Korea "with the toughest counteraction," according to a statement from its Foreign Ministry late Friday.

The war in Ukraine and tensions between Washington and Beijing have made Russia and China less cooperative when it comes to the United Nations Security Council imposing additional sanctions on the North. Both China and Russia are veto-wielding members of the council. That may embolden North Korea to test more missiles, South Korean officials said.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/04 Fruitless: search for missing Russia troops
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/04/world/europe/missing-russian-soldiers.html
GIST	<p>During the six days she spent flipping through pictures of dead soldiers at Russia's main military morgue for the Ukraine war, Irina Chistyakova tried not to look directly at the disfigured corpses.</p> <p>If the face was charred beyond recognition, she would focus on whether the teeth resembled those of her son Kirill, a military conscript who had last contacted her from inside Ukraine in late March. In total, she said, she had viewed about 500 photographs.</p> <p>Ms. Chistyakova is among the hundreds of Russians engaged in a grass-roots effort to find missing sons, husbands, brothers and other loved ones who fought for Russia, a role that relatives and human rights advocates say was thrust upon them because the Ministry of Defense was woefully unprepared for the task.</p> <p>The scale is staggering. The Pentagon in late summer estimated that 70,000 to 80,000 Russian soldiers have been killed and wounded, with many others missing.</p>

But their fate has remained a mystery for many of their loved ones back home, who say the system for finding missing soldiers is as disorganized as Russia's military effort, which has been marked by dysfunction from the beginning.

"On the phone they tell us that everything is OK, that they are searching, and they put exactly the same thing in their formal, written responses," Ms. Chistyakova, 44, said in an interview.

When she traveled to the southwestern city of Rostov-on-Don to scan photos of the dead, she said, she identified two men previously reported as missing from her son's infantry unit. "How are you searching, if I went to the morgue and found two of your soldiers there?" she said. "That is the question."

In their quest for answers, relatives said that they hunt for information from all quarters, including repeatedly calling a special Ministry of Defense hotline. They appeal to local governorates, contact military commanders or other soldiers, visit hospitals and morgues and spend countless hours online scanning videos of captured soldiers, as well as seeking advice from online chat groups.

Most come away frustrated, still seeking answers.

"Getting information about Russian soldiers who are fighting, who were taken prisoner or who died has been a problem since the beginning of the conflict," said Sergei Krivenko, the director of a human rights group that provides legal aide to Russian soldiers. "No one in the ministry of defense expected such a scale," he added, and hence it "simply did not create the appropriate services."

Russia has only announced casualty figures twice, in late March and in September, when the minister of defense, Sergei K. Shoigu, said that nearly 6,000 soldiers had died. Western estimates are far higher. There are no public Russian government figures of the missing; their troops [sometimes leave corpses abandoned on the side of the road](#) as they retreat.

Ukraine is also grappling with the issue of missing soldiers, but the country's response has been far different. Joint military-civilian search teams have been established in seven conflict areas, Oleh Kotenko, a senior Ukrainian official appointed to organize the effort to track missing persons, told a news conference on Sept. 30.

More than 4,000 people are listed as missing soldiers, Mr. Kotenko said, although he estimated that up to 15 percent of those were civilians.

In Russia, the absence of any workable official system has prompted parents to organize on their own. Countless chat rooms have sprung up — often focused on soldiers deployed from a particular region or specific units.

While the chat rooms act as a kind of nationwide support group, they also seethe with frustration, acrimony and mistrust. Suspicions abound that some participants are Ukrainian spies seeking to exploit information about soldiers.

A chat room called "A Group of Mobilized, Military Wives and Mothers" has attracted more than 1,500 participants, but spats among members, especially those who express anti-Russian, antiwar sentiments, creates frequent turnover.

The biggest source of frustration seems to be the Ministry of Defense hotline for relatives of the missing. Several people interviewed said the information changed repeatedly — sometimes they were told that the soldier was busy fighting, sometimes that he was killed and sometimes that he was missing.

"It's different every time," said Maria Shumova. Her son Vladimir, 23, had called sporadically after the invasion, managing to blurt out that he was alive and well before the line disconnected. The last call came on March 15.

Ms. Shumova managed to piece together some of what happened by talking to soldiers from Vladimir's reconnaissance unit. She knows that he was with a group of armored personnel carriers in Dmytrivka, east of Kyiv, when one of them was ambushed. The soldiers who went to its rescue were attacked in turn. Vladimir's vehicle exploded and some of his brothers-in-arms think that he died, but his fate remains unclear.

Asked for an update late last month, she texted back: "There is no news, there are no answers, no one cares about anything."

Still, she cannot abandon the hunt. Like many, she scrolls constantly through a Ukrainian Telegram channel called "Look for Your Own" that publishes videos of captured Russian soldiers. She also submitted a query through the Red Cross, but has not received an answer.

"For me it is all the time, you know, waiting, searching, constantly spinning in my head, where to write, how to find my son, I just don't know anymore," Ms. Shumova said.

Accounting for the missing was also a problem in the two wars in Chechnya, said Alexander Cherkasov, a board member for Memorial, the Russian human rights organization that shared the Nobel Peace Prize last month but has been [targeted for liquidation](#) by the Kremlin.

In those conflicts, investigators from Memorial visited the battlefields to try to glean information about the missing. Those days are long gone, Mr. Cherkasov said. "In Putin's Russia, it is impossible for NGOs to take the lead now, it is up to individuals," he said.

The Ministry of Defense did not respond to a request for comment about its system for finding soldiers. Tatyana Moskalkova, the ombudsman for human rights in Russia, said earlier this week that she had spoken with her new Ukrainian counterpart and that they will work on the issue of missing soldiers, but some families who had contacted her previously suggested that she did not seem to have any better information.

Ms. Chistyakova, the mother of Kirill, said she has no love lost for the Ukrainians, nor for the Russian military. She sees the war as an existential battle with the West, echoing the narrative promoted by the Kremlin, but does not think either Russia or Ukraine needed it.

She spent five months wrestling with the military bureaucracy, including presenting a letter to the Kremlin seeking answers signed by the relatives of more than 100 missing (the letter was first [reported](#) by Radio Free Europe's Russian service). Ms. Chistyakova then decided to search herself. She traveled to the morgue in Rostov-on-Don, arriving just before Aug. 26, her son's 20th birthday.

The sprawling morgue is housed in series of low warehouses behind a military hospital. Tattered, bloody uniforms lie about the place and a terrible smell hangs in the air, she said.

Relatives can look at pictures of the bodies on several office computers. A military psychologist hovers nearby, offering tranquilizers if it becomes too much. One group of Chechen men searching for relatives lived near the morgue in their cars for several weeks. Ms. Chistyakova said she had encouraged another man, reluctant to enter, to search the photographs; he found his son.

Through her own research, she discovered that 32 soldiers from her son's platoon were killed, four are missing and four remain alive. Ms. Chistyakova even braved crossing into the war zone, to Donetsk, where one mother had found her son in the morgue.

In Rostov, Ms. Chistyakova managed to identify one soldier because he had an unusual bear claw tattoo on his right hand. His body had arrived at the morgue on June 3, more than two months before she found him. Nobody was actively looking because his parents were dead, she said, so she called his stepmother to tell her.

After her first day, she sat under the stars on a darkened residential sidewalk in the city, weeping and praying.

Her son is still missing. She is weighing whether to go back to the morgue.

“We don’t give a damn about the politics, whatever you are doing there, just give them back,” Ms. Chistyakova said. “If they were killed, give back their bodies.”

The family of Vladimir Veselov, 36, had last heard from the contract soldier around May 16, and endured a month of silence before they began to look for him.

His sister Elena said that she called the hotline and was told repeatedly that Vladimir did not appear on any “negative lists,” the euphemism for those confirmed killed, wounded or missing. Sleuthing among her brother’s fellow soldiers led her to his unit’s field medic, code-named Scalpel.

An exploding tank shell had seriously wounded Vladimir in the head near Kharkiv, Scalpel told her. The medic had evacuated Vladimir to a hospital in Belgorod and had not seen him since.

Elena began calling military hospitals in Belgorod and beyond. Toward the end of August, someone at Burdenko Hospital in Moscow, considered Russia’s best military hospital, told her that the intensive care patients included an unidentified soldier in a vegetative state. He sported a distinctive tattoo on his upper left arm, a large, winged dragon, and the hospital sent her a photograph of it. She had found her brother.

Although his eyes are open, he doesn’t recognize anyone and only responds to pain, she said. Surgeons removed part of his brain and have rated his chances for improving as minimal.

She is glad to have found him alive, but is still alarmed by his condition, and by the general cavalier attitude toward finding the missing.

“I do not understand why they are treated like this — like they are abandoned and no one cares about them, no one is counting them if they are missing — oh well, never mind — I am shocked by it,” she said.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/05 Extended Kenya drought kills off wildlife
SOURCE	https://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2022/11/05/kenya-Kenya-drought-wildlife/9221667654671/
GIST	<p>Nov. 5 (UPI) -- Wildlife officials in Kenya said a prolonged drought in the country has killed off hundreds of animals, including more than 200 elephants and 500 wildebeest.</p> <p>The east African nation's two rainy seasons--October to December and March to May-- "failed completely" in late 2021 and early 2022, Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife Secretary Peninah Malonza said in a news release Friday.</p> <p>She said the drought in southern, eastern and northern Kenya has killed mostly herbivore species of animals. The wildlife have experienced a shortage of food and water resources.</p> <p>Kenya wildlife officials counted the deaths of various species between February and October, finding that the drought has killed 512 wildebeest, 381 zebras, 205 elephants, 49 Grevy's zebras, 51 buffalo, 12 giraffes, eight reticulated animals and four Massai animals.</p> <p>The most affected areas include the Amboseli, Tsavo and Laikipia-Samburu ecosystems.</p> <p>The statement from Malonza said the ministry has distributed hay and water to affected areas and increased surveillance of wildlife outside protected regions.</p>

	"In addition, the government of Kenya together with development and conservation partners will work together to provide finances to destock Ngulia Rhino Sanctuary (Tsavo West National Park) as well as other overstocked Rhino sanctuaries to prevent any eminent drought related mortality of black and white Rhinos in our sanctuaries," she said.
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	11/05 Iran admits: supplied drones to Russia
SOURCE	https://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2022/11/05/Ukraine-Iran-drones-infrastructure-Russia/9741667649866/
GIST	<p>Nov. 5 (UPI) -- Iran for the first time admitted it has supplied drones to the Russian military but suggested the transfers took place before Moscow invaded Ukraine.</p> <p>Against mounting evidence of Iranian drones being found and shot down on the Ukrainian battlefield, Tehran's foreign minister, Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, said his country provided Russia drones ahead of its invasion.</p> <p>The drones, which are harder to shoot down by air defense systems because of their small size, have been effective in inflicting significant damage to power stations and other critical civilian infrastructure in Ukraine ahead of the cold winter season.</p> <p>"Some western countries have accused Iran of helping the war in Ukraine by providing drones and missiles to Russia," Amir-Abdollahian said in Tehran. "The part regarding missiles is completely wrong. The part about drones is correct, we did provide a limited number of drones to Russia in the months before the start of the war in Ukraine."</p> <p>Meanwhile, Ukraine's national energy utility said on Saturday it is setting up contingency plans to operate without reliable sources of power because of the Russia campaign. Local governments have been taking steps on how to respond to any extended loss of power.</p> <p>One of those scenarios includes orderly evacuations from Kyiv if the entire city loses power and is unable to operate essential services for long stretches. This comes as Western allies promised to step up efforts to help Ukraine get such services up and running again in short periods of time.</p> <p>"We understand that if Russia continues such attacks, we may lose our entire electricity system," said Roman Tkachuk, the director of security for Kyiv's government. "That's why we are preparing for a cold winter."</p> <p>The British Defense Ministry said Saturday that Russia has started to add up to 120,000 personnel to the Ukraine conflict zone this month. The ministry warned, though, the soldiers have been forced to the battlefield with little training because they lack trainers.</p> <p>That has limited the effectiveness of the additional Moscow group against battle-hardened and motivated Ukrainians.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	11/04 WSDOT winter weather plan for I-90 camp
SOURCE	https://www.krem.com/article/news/local/spokane-county/wsdot-implementing-winter-weather-plan-for-homeless-camp/293-fa589cdb-1ccd-4841-8ec0-bd018951d4a0
GIST	SPOKANE, Wash. — The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) announced on Friday the department is implementing a winter weather plan to keep people at the homeless camp near I-90 warm during the winter months.

	<p>With snow on the ground and freezing temperatures in the forecast next week, state agencies and local providers are focusing on ensuring people at the homeless camp near I-90 have what they need to be safe during the winter season.</p> <p>Some of those plans include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potable water tanks on site that will be insulated and heated so drinking water does not freeze. • Water deliveries, every other day, will begin next week. • Service providers will put up warming tents in the middle of the encampment, with propane heat, so people can stay warm. Tents are expected to have capacity for 20 people. • State and local outreach partners will continue to offer people at the homeless camp near I-90 transportation, for those who do not want to stay in the encampment. • If the city decides to implement a winter weather plan that includes additional shelter space, WSDOT will offer those alternatives as well. <p>While multiple state agencies and service providers continue to work to permanently close the homeless camp near I-90 and find suitable housing alternatives for people living there, WSDOT said it is imperative to provide appropriate resources for the encampment during winter weather.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	11/04 Seattle protest blocks ambulance w/patient
SOURCE	https://komonews.com/news/local/downtown-protest-on-i-5-blocks-ambulance-carrying-patient-in-critical-condition-seattle-downtown-washington-state-patrol-harborview#
GIST	<p>SEATTLE, Wash. — During the Friday afternoon protest on northbound I-5 in downtown Seattle, protesters blocked an ambulance that was treating a 37-year-old male who was in critical condition.</p> <p>Dozens of people were out of their cars on the road, blocking the lanes, protesting the war in Ethiopia.</p> <p>WSDOT reported that I-5 was shut down for more than an hour. While this was happening, KOMO News gathered from the Seattle Fire Department, a medic unit was stuck in a traffic jam and trying to rush a patient in critical condition to Harborview.</p> <p>“We’re not sure the reason but all lanes of traffic are blocked and looks like there’s a stand-still that goes about a mile,” said a medic, who was making calls over the radio as the protest was happening.</p> <p>As medics were taking the man to Harborview, they encountered the protest along Northbound I-5 near the James St. exit. A Washington State Patrol Trooper was able to assist in creating a lane for the paramedics to gain access to the exit.</p> <p>“We’re transporting patients to Harborview and we are on the collector distributor northbound, about a block south of James street,” said the medic on the call.</p> <p>I-5 NB eventually opened back up. Seattle fire officials said it took crews 19 minutes to get to the hospital.</p> <p>At this time, there are no tickets or citations that were written by WSP during the I-5 protest this afternoon. However, that does not mean that there may not be any that are issued in the future.</p> <p>WSP also had no prior knowledge regarding the protest before it occurred.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	11/04 CDC: tough winter; flu, RSV, Covid collide
SOURCE	https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2022/11/04/flu-rsv-covid-cases-surge/
GIST	The United States continues to experience an unusually high and early uptick in flu and respiratory syncytial virus infections, straining a health-care system trying to recover from the worst of the coronavirus pandemic.

While new coronavirus cases leveled off in recent weeks, federal health officials warned Friday they are confronting elevated levels of other viruses that are roaring back as pre-pandemic life returns and many Americans, particularly children, lack immunity. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued an advisory about respiratory viruses to thousands of health care providers in an attempt to bolster testing, treatment and vaccination.

At least 4,300 influenza patients were admitted to hospitals in the week ending Oct. 29, the highest for that time period in a decade and nearly double the prior week, according to data released Friday. The flu season began six weeks early this year, at a level not seen since the 2009 H1N1 swine flu pandemic.

After enduring two consecutive winters crushed by an influx of covid-19 patients, American hospitals face the prospect of a third covid winter – this time, slammed on three fronts.

“With increased RSV infections, a rising number of flu cases and the ongoing burden of covid-19 in our communities, there’s no doubt we will face some challenges this winter,” Dawn O’Connell, assistant Health and Human Services secretary for preparedness and response, told reporters Friday. “But it’s important to remember ... that RSV and flu are not new, and we have safe and effective vaccines for covid-19 and the flu.”

Respiratory syncytial virus, a common cause of cold-like symptoms in children known as RSV, continues to rise nationally and strain children’s hospitals. Trends vary regionally; RSV appears to be receding in the southeast and mountain west as influenza surges. There is no vaccine for RSV, but Pfizer plans to seek approval for one administered during pregnancy.

Health officials are bracing for the possibility that covid again overwhelms hospitals, depending on which new variants become dominant, because governments have abandoned efforts to limit transmission and few senior citizens who are most susceptible to severe disease are up to date on their shots.

Some health officials have described the confluence of influenza, RSV and coronavirus a “triple-demic.”

“Covid has impacted the seasonal patterns of all these respiratory infections,” said Tina Tan, a pediatric infectious diseases specialist at the Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children’s Hospital of Chicago, where RSV cases are surging and flu cases are starting to rise. “Whether the pattern will go back to the way it was pre-covid, I don’t think anyone really knows, but it does make it more complicated to provide the care that people need when you have three viruses that can cause serious diseases surging at the same time.”

David Rubin, who tracks respiratory viruses for the PolicyLab at Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, said it’s premature to declare a hospital crisis. A youth mental health crisis and a nationwide shortage of pediatric beds have made it harder for the health-care system to handle the rise in respiratory cases, he said. But adult hospitals are better positioned to respond.

“It depends on when these peaks occur and how significant of a magnitude we are going to see covid come back this winter,” Rubin said. “We have yet to see a real acceleration this year in terms of covid hospitalizations. If you are looking for silver lining, that’s one.”

The U.S. government has medical supplies including personal protective equipment and ventilators available in its stockpile, but officials say no state has yet to request additional personnel or supplies.

“State and territorial public health officials urge parents and families to take precautions now in order to be healthy and to avoid putting strain on hospital systems,” said Anne Zink, a top Alaska public health official and president of the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials, in a written statement.

Those precautions including staying up to date on vaccines, staying home while sick and washing hands regularly. Often missing or downplayed in government recommendations is mask-wearing, a measure

rarely adopted during past respiratory virus seasons but proven effective at blunting the spread of coronavirus.

Lynn Goldman, dean of the Milken Institute School of Public Health at George Washington University who serves on a committee that advises CDC Director Rochelle Walensky, asked at a meeting Thursday why agency officials were not recommending masking given the strain on hospitals.

“At this point, nothing can be mandatory,” Brendan Jackson, the CDC’s incident manager on covid-19, replied Thursday.

José Romero, director of the CDC’s National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases, mentioned well-fitted masks at the end of a list of recommended precautionary measures during the agency’s press briefing Friday.

“If a family wishes, they can use masks,” Romero said.

The lack of exposure to other viruses when people practiced social distancing and wore masks to avoid coronavirus has contributed to the current situation, experts say.

“All of that regular exposure that usually happens that bolsters immunity year after year didn’t happen,” Walensky said Tuesday during an appearance before the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. “If you go two years without getting that infection, without getting that protection from infection and then all of a sudden, boom, everybody from zero to three years gets RSV, you see the impact on health care.”

While RSV is among the leading causes for hospitalization in young children, the virus also poses a greater threat to senior citizens and immunocompromised adults. Despite the decline in coronavirus cases, doctors say the medically vulnerable should consider taking heightened precautions due to the circulation of other respiratory viruses.

“If you are at higher risk, don’t go into those high-risk areas or mask if you have to go into those areas with an N95,” said Aaron Glatt, chief of infectious diseases at Mount Sinai South Nassau in New York.

For the flu season, the strain on hospitals may not be as debilitating to the health-care system if the cases are fairly mild and patients are discharged quickly. Lynnette Brammer, an epidemiologist who heads the CDC’s domestic influenza surveillance team, said officials have yet to see evidence of a more virulent strain of influenza.

“Right now we are not seeing anything that would lead us to believe it’s more severe,” Brammer said Friday. “It’s just early.”

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/05 Reports: alcohol death toll growing
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/health/alcohol-death-toll-is-growing-us-government-reports-say/
GIST	<p>NEW YORK (AP) — The rate of deaths that can be directly attributed to alcohol rose nearly 30% in the U.S. during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to new government data.</p> <p>The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention had already said the overall number of such deaths rose in 2020 and 2021. Two reports from the CDC this week provided further details on which groups have the highest death rates and which states are seeing the largest numbers.</p> <p>“Alcohol is often overlooked” as a public health problem, said Marissa Esser, who leads the CDC’s alcohol program. “But it is a leading preventable cause of death.”</p> <p>A report released Friday focused on more than a dozen kinds of “alcohol-induced” deaths that were wholly blamed on drinking. Examples include alcohol-caused liver or pancreas failure, alcohol poisoning,</p>

withdrawal and certain other diseases. There were more than 52,000 such deaths last year, up from 39,000 in 2019.

The rate of such deaths had been increasing in the two decades before the pandemic, by 7% or less each year.

In 2020, they rose 26%, to about 13 deaths per 100,000 Americans. That's the highest rate recorded in at least 40 years, said the study's lead author, Merianne Spencer.

Such deaths are 2 1/2 times more common in men than in women, but rose for both in 2020, the study found. The rate continued to be highest for people ages 55 to 64, but rose dramatically for certain other groups, including jumping 42% among women ages 35 to 44.

The second report, published earlier this week in JAMA Network Open, looked at a wider range of deaths that could be linked to drinking, such as motor vehicle accidents, suicides, falls and cancers.

More than 140,000 of that broader category of alcohol-related deaths occur annually, based on data from 2015 to 2019, the researchers said. CDC researchers say about 82,000 of those deaths are from drinking too much over a long period of time and 58,000 from causes tied to acute intoxication.

The study found that as many as 1 in 8 deaths among U.S. adults ages 20 to 64 were alcohol-related deaths. New Mexico was the state with the highest percentage of alcohol-related deaths, 22%. Mississippi had the lowest, 9%

Excessive drinking is associated with chronic dangers such as liver cancer, high blood pressure, stroke and heart disease. Drinking by pregnant women can lead to miscarriage, stillbirth or birth defects. And health officials say alcohol is a factor in as many as one-third of serious falls among the elderly.

It's also a risk to others through drunken driving or alcohol-fueled violence. Surveys suggest that more than half the alcohol sold in the U.S. is consumed during binge drinking episodes.

Even before the pandemic, U.S. alcohol consumption was trending up, and Americans were drinking more than when Prohibition was enacted. But deaths may have increased since the COVID-19 pandemic began for several reasons, including people with alcohol-related illnesses may have had more trouble getting medical care, Esser said.

She added that the research points to a need to look at steps to reduce alcohol consumption, including increasing alcohol taxes and enacting measures that limit where people can buy beer, wine and liquor.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/05 Seattle dismal new revenue forecast
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/politics/seattle-revenue-forecast-falls-again-delays-budget-process/
GIST	<p>A dismal new revenue forecast shows the city of Seattle's revenues down \$82 million in November, leaving the City Council to rectify a more than \$145 million shortfall in the general fund at the end of budget season.</p> <p>For most of the year, the city has been anticipating a revenue shortfall, which leapt from \$117 million in April to \$140 million by August, driven by stalled growth, growing inflation and a delay by city officials in finding new revenue sources.</p> <p>In the final quarterly update of the year Wednesday, the council learned the revenue gap had grown to \$145 million in the general fund, after an anticipated \$64 million decrease in Real Estate Excise Tax revenues, a decrease of \$9.4 million in general fund revenues, and a decrease of \$4.5 million in revenues from the Sweetened Beverage Tax.</p>

With inflation remaining at a 40-year high and the Federal Reserve raising interest rates, the city's revenue forecast and overall economic outlook has worsened throughout the year.

"Economic conditions have continued to deteriorate and expectations about future conditions have also deteriorated," said Ben Noble, Director of the city's Office of Economic and Revenue Forecasts, in a presentation to council Wednesday.

City Council Budget Chair Teresa Mosqueda was scheduled to introduce her balancing package — a revised version of the budget made of elements from the mayor's proposal and council amendments — on Monday, but has postponed the process by a week to account for the new forecast.

Mosqueda said Friday that in order to meet the new projection, she'll spend the next week looking at cuts, focusing on new programs and spending.

"I'll be looking at anything that is new, that is last in, because in times like this we need to focus on sustainability," Mosqueda said Friday, noting she would also prioritize spending on basic government services or anything that "directly helps our most vulnerable populations."

First, she said she'll consider trimming or delaying projects funded by the real estate excise tax other than the most crucial city services, such as affordable housing and public restrooms.

Other new programs or investments, she said, may get cut to prevent the city from entering an austerity budget — or one that reduces base spending.

"We are scrubbing the budget, not only for new adds from the council but also from the Mayor's Office as well," Mosqueda said.

Councilmembers spent October drafting 100 amendments to Seattle Mayor Bruce Harrell's proposed budget, including ones that would grow or add various services. Harrell's original proposal included more than \$30 million in new ongoing spending in areas like [expanding the city's homeless encampment-focused Unified Care Team](#) and [efforts to mitigate graffiti](#).

Mosqueda did not expound on which investments might be cut in the balancing package, now scheduled to come out Nov. 14.

Jamie Housen, spokesperson for the mayor's office, said Friday that Harrell understands the constraints on the budget, but hopes to see his investments kept in place.

"Based on our collaboration throughout this process, we believe the Council will ensure these priorities remain adequately funded in the final budget," Housen said.

Even before the updated forecast, the mayor's proposed budget relied heavily on use of the city's JumpStart payroll tax, sweetened beverage tax and other revenue streams to pad the general fund for 2023 and 2024, due to slowed revenues from other sources.

Mosqueda, who championed JumpStart in 2020, has been [cautiously open to the city tapping into the funds](#) gathered from the payroll tax in 2023 and 2024, as long as the use was temporary and left some funds to cover its intended uses, including affordable housing and Green New Deal environmental improvements.

"JumpStart has helped play a role in protecting against austerity this year ... but my goal is to stay in compliance with the spend plan as codified," Mosqueda said, noting that any other use of funds should be limited to "two years max."

	<p>JumpStart requires employers with at least \$7 million in annual payroll to pay between .7% and 2.4% on salaries and wages paid to Seattle employees who make at least \$150,000 per year.</p> <p>This year, after collecting for the first time in 2021, JumpStart brought the city \$231 million in revenue, exceeding the city's \$200 million estimate.</p> <p>To prevent "revenue volatility" beyond 2023 and 2024, Mosqueda said the city needs additional "progressive revenue" sources, modeled after JumpStart, to avoid relying on the fund for revenue when older sources come up short.</p> <p>The Seattle Revenue Stabilization Workgroup — a new task force composed of representatives from council, the mayor's office and the community — will share a report on progressive revenue options in 2023. No new revenue sources are likely to affect the budget until 2025.</p> <p>Council will begin voting on the balancing package Nov. 21, and the final vote is scheduled for Nov. 28. Council will still hold public comment periods as scheduled: at public hearings at 9:30 a.m. Tuesday, and at 5 p.m. on Nov. 15, and during public comment during the regular City Council meeting at 9:30 a.m. Nov. 21.</p>
Return to Top	

Cyber, Tech Awareness

[Top of page](#)

HEADLINE	11/07 Medibank refuses to pay ransom
SOURCE	https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/medibank-says-hacker-accessed-data-97-million-customers-refuses-pay-ransom-2022-11-06/
GIST	<p>Nov 7 (Reuters) - Medibank Private Ltd (MPL.AX), Australia's biggest health insurer, on Monday said no ransom payment will be made to the criminal responsible for a recent data theft, wherein around 9.7 million current and former customers' data was compromised.</p> <p>Highlighting findings of the firm's investigation to date, Medibank confirmed that name, date of birth, address, phone number, and email addresses for around 9.7 million current and former customers were accessed in the data theft.</p> <p>Cyber security issues in Australia have seen a sharp rise in recent times, with a government report suggesting there is one attack every seven minutes.</p> <p>"Based on the extensive advice we have received from cybercrime experts we believe there is only a limited chance paying a ransom would ensure the return of our customers' data and prevent it from being published," Medibank CEO David Koczkar said.</p> <p>Koczkar added that paying a ransom could encourage the hacker to extort customers directly, hurting more people. The insurer reiterated that business operations remained normal during the time of the cyberattack, with customers continuing to access health services.</p> <p>Medibank warned its customers must be vigilant as the criminal may leak the data online or attempt to contact customers directly.</p> <p>Corporate Australia has seen a string of attacks in just the last couple of weeks, with Singapore Telecommunications' (STEL.SI) unit Optus disclosing a breach of up to 10 million customer accounts, and Woolworths (WOW.AX) revealing that data of millions of customers using its bargain shopping website had been compromised.</p>

	Medibank said it will commission an external review to learn from the cyberattack whilst expanding its Cyber Response Support Program.
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	11/04 Link: FIN7 crime cartel to Black Basta
SOURCE	https://therecord.media/fin7-cybercrime-cartel-tied-to-black-basta-ransomware-operation-report/
GIST	<p>Cybersecurity researchers said they have tied the long-running cybercrime cartel FIN7 to the Black Basta ransomware operation — a group behind high-profile attacks on the American Dental Association and German wind farm operator Deutsche Windtechnik.</p> <p>A new report from SentinelOne found that in multiple Black Basta incidents, the threat actors made use of a custom cyberdefense impairment tool that FIN7 developed.</p> <p>SentinelOne’s senior threat intelligence researcher Antonio Pirozzi noted that FIN7 has previously been tied to other notable ransomware operations like Darkside, BlackMatter, REvil and ALPHV.</p> <p>“The exact nature of the involvement is open to speculation, but it is based on signing certificates used by FIN7 to sign ransomware or the presence of FIN7 backdoors and toolkits in ransomware incidents,” he said.</p> <p>“Other researchers have identified multiple threat actor clusters as being affiliated with FIN7 with varying levels of confidence. One important highlight of the report is that we assess with high confidence that Black Basta is a private operation and not a Ransomeare-as-a-service (RaaS). This leads to a high level of control over all the operations and special trust into the different possible affiliations.”</p> <p>Pirozzi explained that it “would not surprise” him if Black Basta is a FIN7-owned operation but noted that the “level of collaboration likely goes beyond selling/buying some tool advertised in some cybercrime forum somewhere.”</p> <p>“The testing of the evasion tools is tightly connected to the deployment phase, and appears to be something quite unique and specific to Black Basta,” he added.</p> <p>Several ransomware experts confirmed the report’s findings and noted that the two had been previously tied based on the tools used.</p> <p>The report also highlights the way Black Basta operators use several popular vulnerabilities including PrintNightmare, ZeroLogon and NoPac.</p> <p>The ransomware emerged in April and quickly racked up more than 90 attacks on organizations by September.</p> <p>“The rapidity and volume of attacks prove that the actors behind Black Basta are well-organized and well-resourced, and yet there has been no indications of Black Basta attempting to recruit affiliates or advertising as a RaaS on the usual darknet forums or crimeware marketplaces,” the researchers said.</p> <p>“Our research indicates that the individuals behind Black Basta ransomware develop and maintain their own toolkit and either exclude affiliates or only collaborate with a limited and trusted set of affiliates, in similar ways to other ‘private’ ransomware groups such as Conti, TA505, and Evilcorp.”</p> <p>SentinelLabs said it began tracking Black Basta in June, when it began infections involving the Qakbot malware. The malware is delivered by email in Microsoft Office documents and exploits CVE-2022-30190.</p> <p>Black Basta was also seen using ZeroLogon (CVE-2020-1472), NoPac (CVE-2021-42287, CVE-2021-42278) and PrintNightmare (CVE-2021-34527).</p>

Behind FIN7

FIN7 – previously known as Carbanak – has been operating dozens of cybercriminal efforts since 2012. The group started out using point-of-sale malware to run financial scams but switched to ransomware around 2020, with alleged connections to REvil, Conti, Darkside, BlackMatter.

SentinelOne said that the cybercriminal cartel likely “began writing tools from scratch in order to disassociate their new operations from the old.”

“The crimeware ecosystem is constantly expanding, changing, and evolving. FIN7 (or Carbanak) is often credited with innovating in the criminal space, taking attacks against banks and PoS systems to new heights beyond the schemes of their peers,” the researchers said.

“As we clarify the hand behind the elusive Black Basta ransomware operation, we aren’t surprised to see a familiar face behind this ambitious closed-door operation. While there are many new faces and diverse threats in the ransomware and double extortion space, we expect to see the existing professional criminal outfits putting their own spin on maximizing illicit profits in new ways.”

A key member of FIN7 was sentenced to 84 months in prison and ordered to pay \$2.5 million in restitution [in June 2021](#) and another was given a one-year suspended prison sentence by a Russian court [in December 2021](#). At least five FIN7 members have been identified by law enforcement agencies.

FIN7 is accused of attacking more than 100 U.S. companies between 2015 and 2018 and orchestrated intrusions at tens of U.S. retailers, such as Chipotle Mexican Grill, Chili’s, Arby’s, Red Robin, and Jason’s Deli, where they deployed malware that collected millions of customer payment card details that they later sold on hacking forums.

Adam Flatley, director of threat intelligence at Redacted, told The Record that FIN7 has been partnering with multiple ransomware groups for years now.

But Flatley said what stood out most was not that Black Basta worked with FIN7. Instead, the report illustrated how FIN7 – which he said is “one of the most talented and capable cybercriminal gangs out there” – continues to enable less capable ransomware gangs to be more effective.

“They’re making the ransomware problem worse by continuing to bring their nearly nation-state level talent to the table as a force multiplier,” he said.

“Disrupting FIN7 operations needs to be a key part of any international counter-ransomware strategy.”

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/04 Insurance giant settles NotPetya lawsuit
SOURCE	https://www.cyberscoop.com/insurance-giant-settles-notpetya-lawsuit/
GIST	<p>The settlement last week in a \$100 million lawsuit over whether insurance giant Zurich should cover losses Mondelez International suffered from NotPetya may very well reshape the entire cyber insurance marketplace.</p> <p>Zurich initially denied claims from Mondelez after the malware, which experts estimate caused some \$10 billion in damages globally, wreaked havoc on its computer networks. The insurance provider claimed an act of war exemption since it’s widely believed Russian military hackers unleashed NotPetya on a Ukrainian company before it spread around the world.</p> <p>Now, however, it’s increasingly clear insurers aren’t off the hook for NotPetya payouts or from covering losses from other attacks with clear links to nation-state hackers.</p>

That's because in this case, what Mondelez and many other corporations endured was not an act of war, but "collateral damage" in a much larger cyberconflict that had nothing to do with them, said James Lewis, director of the Strategic Technologies Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

"We're going to need to rethink what act of war means in cyberspace when it comes to [insurance](#)," said Lewis. "The current definitions come out of the 19th century when we had pirates, navies and privateers."

Last week's ruling in favor of Mondelez follows [a January ruling in a New Jersey court](#) that sided with global pharmaceutical company Merck in a similar case. Its insurance companies initially refused to pay for damages from NotPetya. Merck claimed losses that amounted to \$1.4 billion. The insurers are appealing the ruling.

While the New Jersey ruling may not have set a binding precedent, "it was certainly an indication of how judges and juries might view Zurich's argument," said Josephine Wolff, an associate professor of cybersecurity policy at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University and author of ["Cyberinsurance Policy: Rethinking Risk in an Age of Ransomware, Computer Fraud, Data Breaches, and Cyberattacks."](#)

The Merck and Mondelez cases involved the exact same set of circumstances, which were "not being interpreted, at least so far, as an act of war," she said. "I don't think insurers will stop fighting to deny coverage for large state-backed cyberattacks, but I think they will shift the strategy for how they do it by writing new exclusions and moving away from arguing that these attacks are 'warlike' acts."

Insurers seized on the NotPetya episode to test how courts would rule on cyber coverage questions, particularly when there's so much evidence pointing to one particular nation-state actor. Since NotPetya was widely attributed to the Russian government it gave the industry a "really strong opportunity" to set legal precedent limiting their responsibility in these instances, Wolff said.

Now, she expects insurers will be much more upfront about the fact that they aren't going to cover acts of cyberwar or limit payouts for NotPetya type incidents in the future.

Already, [Lloyd's of London said it will stop](#) covering certain cyberattacks next year. [The Register reported](#) that the company's underwriting director Tony Chaudhry wrote in a memo that due to "systematic risk" policies should include "a suitable clause excluding liability for losses arising from any state-backed cyberattack."

"Over time the risks have gotten larger and more people have gotten larger amounts of insurance," said Ari Schwartz, managing director of cybersecurity services at the Washington law firm Venable LLP. "It started to become a more mature insurance marketplace ... [where] they're not just going to pay every claim."

Schwartz said many factors contribute to whether NotPetya should be considered an act of war, including whether damages could have been prevented with patching or other "remedial steps which make it seem like it's not really an act of war." Timing of the attack and how quickly the company reacts are also key factors.

In September, the Treasury Department asked for industry input on whether it should provide any "support for the cyber insurance market," [FedScoop reported](#). It is exploring policy measures such as "the creation of a backstop program for cyber insurance risk akin to the Terrorism Risk Insurance Program, which was created after 9/11 to allow Wall Street to continue to offer property insurance policies that include coverage for damage caused by acts of terrorism."

FedScoop also noted the rising cost of cyber insurance and that the total cost of premiums increased 75% to \$4.8 billion in 2021 compared to the previous year, according to data from the ratings agency A.M. Best. "In a June report, the agency noted that the number of reported claims in the U.S. cyber market had swelled to nearly 26,000 during 2021, up from 22,000 in the prior year, and about 6,000 in 2016."

	<p>Despite the fact that the cyber insurance market is still evolving, Davis Hake, vice president of policy for the cyber underwriter Resilience Insurance, said it has matured since the initial 2017 NotPetya attack. There's "improved coverage clarity and confidence [for] clients in purchasing dedicated cyber insurance."</p> <p>Put more simply, insurance companies are becoming more transparent. The judge who ruled against the insurers in the Merck case made that point, too.</p> <p>"Both parties to this contract are aware that cyber attacks of various forms, sometimes from private sources and sometimes from nation states, have become more common," New Jersey Superior Court Judge Thomas Walsh said in his opinion. "Despite this, insurers did nothing to change the language of the exemption to reasonably put the insured on notice that it intended to exclude cyber attacks."</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	11/04 Financial ransomware losses topped \$1.2B
SOURCE	https://www.scmagazine.com/analysis/policy/us-treasury-says-financial-ransomware-losses-topped-1-2-billion-last-year
GIST	<p>US financial institutions processed roughly \$1.2 billion in ransomware-related payments last year, a nearly 200 percent increase compared to 2020, according to the Treasury Department.</p> <p>The sharp increase in cost underscores the damage of ransomware on the private sector. The Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN) noted that its analysis indicates that "ransomware continues to pose a significant threat to US critical infrastructure sectors, businesses, and the public."</p> <p>Such incidents skyrocketed in the second half of 2021, with 75% of activities related to Russian cybercriminals, according to the report. FinCEN said four out of five top ransomware variants during the period are connected to Russia, though they cannot attribute it directly to Moscow.</p> <p>"While attribution of malware is difficult, these variants were identified in open source information as using Russian-language code, being coded specifically not to targets in Russia or post-Soviet states, or as advertising primarily on Russian-language sites," the report read.</p> <p>The report comes as the White House wrapped up the International Counter Ransomware Initiative (CRI) summit in Washington earlier this week, which brought together 36 countries and the European Union as well as private sector members to tackle the ever-changing ransomware landscape. The summit has outlined the efforts to address ransomware attacks in the upcoming year, including the establishment of an International Counter Ransomware Task Force led by Australia to share information and disrupt attacks collaboratively. In another effort announced at the conference, Lithuania will build a fusion cell at the Regional Cyber Defense Centre to analyze the technical trends of ransomware.</p> <p>Despite the financial sector being heavily regulated to protect customers' data, ransomware groups are constantly targeting banks and financial services as they are more likely to pay.</p> <p>"Whether it's an organization wanting to avoid public scrutiny for the breach occurring or concerns with government penalties, many do not report the attacks and give in to the ransom demands," Michael Bruemmer, global vice president of Experian Data Breach Resolution, explained to SC Media.</p> <p>According to a recent study by Sophos, 52% of financial institutions that experienced ransomware attacks ended up paying the ransom, which is higher than the global average of 46%.</p> <p>"Additionally, unlike hospitals and schools, [financial institutions] are unlikely to garner any sympathy from the general public, which puts greater pressure on them to pay," Vincent D'Agostino, former senior special agent for the FBI New York cyber division and head of digital forensics and incident response at BlueVoyant, added.</p>

	<p>While the public and private sectors have made concrete efforts to address elevating threats, ransomware tactics have evolved accordingly.</p> <p>More ransomware groups are shifting to double extortion attacks, stealing data and exfiltrating them before the encryption, according to Drew Schmitt, ransomware negotiator and principal threat intelligence analyst at GuidePoint Security.</p> <p>“In some cases, to put more pressure on victims to pay the ransom, threat actors even threaten organizations that they will send leaked data to organizations’ competitors,” Schmitt told SC Media in an interview.</p> <p>The prevalence of cryptocurrency also contributes to the increase in ransomware attacks, as money could, according to Bruemmer, “move more fluidly across borders.”</p> <p>Washington noted the efforts to address risks associated with cryptocurrency during the CRI summit. The White House said members would share information about crypto wallets used for laundering ransoms and hold a workshop on counter illicit financing of ransomware. Participants will also develop and build international standards around anti-money laundering and financing of terrorism for the crypto industry.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	11/04 LockBit group threatens Continental leak
SOURCE	https://www.securityweek.com/ransomware-group-threatens-leak-data-stolen-car-parts-giant-continental
GIST	<p>The notorious LockBit ransomware group is threatening to publish files allegedly stolen from German car parts giant Continental.</p> <p>On its Tor-based leak website, the group says all files — the exact quantity of data or its type is not being specified — will be published on November 4, three hours after the publication of this article.</p> <p>Continental did say in August that it had been targeted in a cyberattack, with hackers infiltrating some of its IT systems.</p> <p>“The company detected the attack in early August and then averted it. Continental’s business activities have not been affected at any point. The technology company maintains full control over its IT systems,” Continental said at the time.</p> <p>The company has not shared any additional information about the attack, but it did suggest at the time that some data may have been stolen.</p> <p>In addition to files, the LockBit ransomware group appears to be threatening to make public the chat logs of conversations between the cybercriminals and the automotive giant. If the attack disclosed by Continental in August was conducted by LockBit, it’s possible that the company has been trying to negotiate with the hackers until now.</p> <p><i>SecurityWeek</i> has reached out to Continental for clarifications and will update this article if additional information is provided by the company.</p> <p>“Over the last year we have seen a dramatic rise in the number of attacks caused by the LockBit ransomware group, with Continental the latest victim to have their data threatened to be published,” said Raj Samani, SVP chief scientist at Rapid7. “Our research shows that LockBit’s market share in ransomware attacks per group has increased from 1% in 2020 to 4% in 2021, and this will only grow if they are allowed to continue stealing sensitive data and selling it on for profit.”</p> <p>Darren Williams, CEO of ransomware specialist Blackfog, commented, “Companies within the automotive sector are typically large, complex organizations with valuable assets under management, so it</p>

	<p>comes as no surprise that ransomware groups are targeting them. What is surprising is that multinational organizations are still relying on technologies that are not up to the job of preventing ransomware.”</p> <p>Williams added, “The recent attack on UK auto dealer Pendragon, which had a record breaking ransom demand of £54 million, clearly demonstrates how lucrative this sector could be for cybercriminals. Worryingly, the trend for targeting this industry will continue unless investment is made in newer technology designed to prevent modern threats.”</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	11/07 Japan joins key NATO cyber agency
SOURCE	https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/japan-joins-key-nato-cyber-agency/
GIST	<p>Japan has become the latest US ally to join NATO’s Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence (CCDCOE), in a move likely to anger Moscow.</p> <p>Former Prime Minister, Shinzo Abe, confirmed on a visit to Estonia four years ago that the East Asia giant would join the center.</p> <p>However, it wasn’t until Friday that the country formally confirmed its place. Defense Minister Seiichi Hamada revealed the news at a press conference, according to the Jiji news agency.</p> <p>Although a Ministry of Defence (MoD) official has apparently been stationed at the CCDCOE since 2019, the latest announcement should signal the start of a more formal arrangement.</p> <p>“JMOD will formally join NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence’s activities, following the completion of participation procedures. JMOD will continue to collaborate with international partners to respond to threats in cyber domain,” noted a brief tweet from the MoD.</p> <p>Japan will join other non-NATO members such as Australia and South Korea as contributing participants. It has already participated in last year’s “Locked Shields” cyber war-gaming exercise.</p> <p>Based in Estonia, the CCDCOE is involved in a range of activities in cyber-defense research, training and exercises that span four focus areas: technology, strategy, operations and law.</p> <p>As such, it plays a key role in shaping NATO responses in the cyber domain, now officially recognized as a legitimate military domain and part of Article 5. This is the “collective defense” section of NATO’s founding treaty which stipulates that an attack on one member is an attack on all.</p> <p>Japan’s newly formalized position with the CCDCOE comes just months after it was agreed that Ukraine should be admitted as a contributing participant.</p> <p>The moves will help to further build and strengthen an alliance of democracies against the growing cyber-threat from autocracies like Russia, China and North Korea.</p> <p>The CCDCOE was founded in 2008 after a series of massive cyber-attacks in Estonia the year before crippled the country for weeks. The attacks were blamed on Russian hackers.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	11/04 US seizes Z-Library ebook site domains
SOURCE	https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/technology/z-library-ebook-site-domains-seized-by-us-dept-of-justice/
GIST	Internet domains for the popular Z-Library online eBook repository were seized early this morning by the U.S. Department of Justice, preventing easy access to the service.

Z-Library is ranked in the top 10k most visited websites on the Internet, offering over 11 million books and 84 million articles for free via its website.

Yesterday, the websites hosted at z-lib.org, b-ok.org, and 3lib.net began displaying a message stating that the service was seized by the US DOJ and the Postal Inspection Service...

However, the U.S. Postal Inspector's office told BleepingComputer they were credited in the seizure notice by mistake.

Friday afternoon, the seizure notice on 3lib.net was updated to indicate the domains were seized by the FBI and the United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York.

"This domain has been seized by the Federal Bureau of Investigation in accordance with a warrant issued pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 981(b) and 21 U.S.C. § 853(f) by the United States District Court for the Eastern District of New York as part of a law enforcement action," reads the seizure notice.

WHOIS information initially showed that the U.S. government seized the domains and switched their DNS servers to NS1.SEIZEDSERVERS.COM and NS2.SEIZEDSERVERS.COM, two DNS servers commonly used by the U.S and law enforcement in domain seizures.

However, since then, the DNS servers for these domains have been switched to Njalla, an anonymizing hosting provider. It is unclear how Z-Library could transfer the domains to the new hosting provider.

Name Server: 1-YOU.NJALLA.NO

Name Server: 2-CAN.NJALLA.IN

Name Server: 3-GET.NJALLA.FO

Even though the clearnet sites are still unavailable, the Z-Library is still accessible via its Tor Onion address. However, there is now a notice informing visitors of server problems that may render the service temporarily unavailable.

While the court order for the seizure is unavailable at this time, the site's domains were likely seized because many of the files were uploaded without the license of the original authors.

Furthermore, when BleepingComputer contacted the US DOJ with questions about the law enforcement action and the seizure of the domains, they declined to comment.

However, complaints to copyright protection offices in the past have resulted in legal actions forcing the platform's registrar to seize the Z-Library domains in 2015 and further domain blockages and DMCA notices in the U.S. and France in 2021.

The USTR (United States Trade Representative) has recently launched an investigation on the platform, causing social media platforms where users promoted Z-Library to be more cautious with what is allowed. As reported by [TorrentFreak](#) last week, TikTok decided to block hashtags related to Z-Library, reportedly responding to copyright holder's complaints.

"Reducing user discoverability of content that violates our Community Guidelines is of paramount importance," stated TikTok.

"Accordingly, TikTok proactively blocks search results for terms that violate our Community Guidelines, including terms that relate to counterfeit goods [...]. We also recently blocked search results for #zlibrary while our team assesses content associated with that hashtag."

At the time of writing this, the [Z-Library channel on TikTok](#) remains accessible, now counting 1.5 billion views.

Z-Library origins

	<p>Z-Library started in 2009 as a free file-sharing platform for academic texts and scholarly journal articles, initially acting as a mirror for Library Genesis (Libgen).</p> <p>Soon though, users started uploading content outside Libgen, so Z-Library gradually became a separate entity while remaining a non-profit, donation-backed platform.</p> <p>The platform's infrastructure of globally dispersed servers hosting a database of over 220 TB was supported by paid memberships, while users received unlimited downloads and file conversion perks in return.</p> <p>At this time, little is known about the platform's operators and commercial status, so Z-Library will likely return to the clearnet using a different set of domains, or possibly even the same ones.</p>
	Return to Top

HEADLINE	11/04 Hackers target state-of-the-art observatory
SOURCE	https://www.darkreading.com/attacks-breaches/cyberattackers-focus-alma-observatory
GIST	<p>The Atacama Large Millimeter Array (ALMA) astronomical observatory in Chile became an unlikely target for a cyberattack this week when unknown assailants knocked its systems offline. The ALMA may not be a household name, but it has a marquee role on the international academic stage, which might explain why it was targeted.</p> <p>The ALMA is a radio telescope, located 5,000 meters above sea level in the unpopulated, geoglyph-laden expanse of the Atacama Desert. There, the conditions are uniquely suited for its mission: imaging early star and planet formation, and offering clues to the origins of the universe. It's maintained in international partnership between Canada, Chile, the EU, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and the United States, and, built at the cost of \$1.4 billion, is the most expensive terrestrial-based telescope in existence.</p> <p>The attack, which happened last weekend, has forced "the suspension of astronomical observations and the public website," the observatory said in a statement on Wednesday. "There are limited email services at the observatory. ... The attack did not compromise the ALMA antennas or any scientific data. Given the nature of the episode, it is not yet possible to estimate a timeline for a return to regular activities."</p> <p>At press time, portions of the website were functioning, but a banner on the site reads, "A number of ALMA online services are currently unavailable — work is in progress to remedy this situation," adding, "replying to tickets by email is currently unavailable."</p> <p>While the nature of the malware used is unknown, motivations could be myriad. Scientific research is no stranger to targeting by nation-states looking for a competitive edge; and, of course, a victim of this caliber in astronomy circles is a good tool for a ransomware gang to use to burnish its Dark Web reputation.</p> <p>Research telescopes have also been attacked in the past, seemingly for the lulz: In 2017, Australia's Zadko telescope was knocked offline, almost preventing it from capturing an anticipated, once-in-a-lifetime collision between two neutron stars in deep space.</p> <p>Awareness that this academic sector is a target for cyberattackers is growing. Some telescopes have taken precautions, such as the National Radio Astronomy Observatory (NRAO) in Indiana, which has contracted the National Science Foundation's ResearchSOC to provide cybersecurity protection.</p>
	Return to Top

HEADLINE	11/04 RomCom threat group expands reach
SOURCE	https://www.darkreading.com/threat-intelligence/romcom-malware-victims-wrapped-solarwinds-keepass
GIST	<p>The RomCom threat group is actively using trojanized versions of popular software products, including SolarWinds Network Performance Monitor, KeePass Open-Source Password Manager, and PDF Reader Pro, to target various English-speaking countries — especially the UK — with a remote access Trojan (RAT). It's a departure in tactics, techniques, and procedures for the advanced persistent threat (APT).</p>

During an analysis of a previous RomCom RAT campaign against the Ukraine military that used fake Advanced IP Scanner software to deliver malware, the threat research and intelligence team at BlackBerry discovered additional, more [widespread campaigns](#) being waged in other geolocations. The researchers determined the UK and other English-speaking countries were [new RomCom targets](#) based on the analysis of the terms of service and the SSL certificates of a new command-and-control server, which was registered in the UK.

Dmitry Bestuzhev, distinguished threat researcher with BlackBerry, tells Dark Reading that the UK is now actually one of the biggest RomCom targets, based on Blackberry's analysis.

"It's predictable, since the US and UK have been the most active supporters of Ukraine in the war with Russia," Bestuzhev says.

Once dropped, the RomCom RAT is designed to exfiltrate any sensitive data or passwords.

"Information is valuable, and when it's strategic, it helps the attacker build better offensive strategies and take advantage in any domain," Bestuzhev adds. "Geopolitics will set new targets. Since RomCom has been widely exposed, it's reasonable to believe the group behind it might change their TTPs."

This isn't the first shift in strategy for the group. "When RomCom was discovered, it was publicly associated with ransomware," Bestuzhev says. "The most recent campaigns prove that the motivation of this threat actor is not money. There is a geopolitical agenda that defines the new targets."

RomCom RAT's Wrap

The trojanizing scheme isn't terribly complicated, the BlackBerry team explained in its report.

RomCom scrapes the code from the software vendor the APT wants to use, registers a malicious domain that's likely to trick the user with typosquatting or similar tactics, trojanizes the real application, and then uploads the malware to the spoofed site. It then sends a phishing lure to the intended target through various channels, and boom — target compromised.

The wrapping approach isn't new, Andrew Barratt, vice president with Coalfire, tells Dark Reading; other APTs and [groups like FIN7](#) have used similar tactics.

"This attack looks like it's a direct copycat of some attacks we investigated during the pandemic, where we saw a number of vendor products support tools being mimicked or 'wrapped' with malware," Barratt says. "The 'wrapping' process means that the underlying legitimate tool is still deployed, but as part of that deployment, some malware is dropped into the target environment."

RomCom Targeting Humans

To defend against RomCom attacks, Mike Parkin, senior technical engineer with Vulcan Cyber, recommends forgetting about the state espionage aspect of the campaign and instead focusing on social engineering and the true targets — individuals.

"With the current geopolitical situation, it's quite likely there is a state-level involvement behind the scenes. At its core, though, this is an attack against human targets," Parkin explains to Dark Reading.

"They are primarily relying on victims being social engineered through email to go to a malicious site disguised as a legitimate one. That makes the users the first line of defense, as well as the primary attack surface."

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/04 Microsoft warns on zero-day spike
SOURCE	https://www.darkreading.com/attacks-breaches/microsoft-zero-day-nation-state-groups-tactics

Enterprise security executives that perceive nation-state-backed cyber groups as a distant threat might want to revisit that assumption, and in a hurry.

Several recent geopolitical events around the world over the past year have spurred a sharp increase in nation-state activity against critical targets, such as port authorities, IT companies, government agencies, news organizations, cryptocurrency firms, and religious groups.

A Microsoft analysis of the [global threat landscape](#) over the last year, released Nov. 4, showed that cyberattacks targeting critical infrastructure doubled, from accounting for 20% of all nation-state attacks to 40% of all attacks that the company's researchers detected.

Furthermore, their tactics are shifting — most notably, Microsoft recorded an uptick in the use of zero-day exploits.

Multiple Factors Drove Increased Nation-State Threat Activity

Unsurprisingly, Microsoft attributed much of the spike to attacks by Russia-backed threat groups related to and in support of the country's war in Ukraine. Some of the attacks were focused on damaging Ukrainian infrastructure, while others were more espionage-related and included targets in the US and other NATO member countries. Ninety percent of Russia-backed cyberattacks that Microsoft detected over the past year targeted NATO countries; 48% of them were directed at IT service providers in these countries.

While the war in Ukraine drove most of the activity by Russian threat groups, other factors fueled an increase in attacks by groups sponsored by China, North Korea, and Iran. Attacks by Iranian groups, for instance, escalated following a presidential change in the country.

Microsoft said it observed Iranian groups launching destructive, disk-wiping attacks in Israel as well as what it described as hack-and-leak operations against targets in the US and EU. One attack in Israel set off emergency rocket signals in the country while another sought to erase data from a victim's systems.

The increase in attacks by North Korean groups coincided with a surge in missile testing in the country. Many of the attacks were focused on stealing technology from aerospace companies and researchers.

Groups in China, meanwhile, increased espionage and data-stealing attacks to support the country's efforts to exert more influence in the region, Microsoft said. Many of their targets included organizations that were privy to information that China considered to be of strategic importance to achieving its goals.

From Software Supply Chain to IT Service Provider Chain

Nation-state actors targeted IT companies more heavily than other sectors in the period. IT companies, such as cloud services providers and managed services providers, accounted for 22% of the organizations that these groups targeted this year. Other heavily targeted sectors included the more traditional think tank and nongovernmental organization victims (17%), education (14%), and government agencies (10%).

In targeting IT service providers, the attacks were designed to compromise hundreds of organizations at once by breaching a single trusted vendor, Microsoft said. The attack last year on Kaseya, which resulted in [ransomware ultimately being distributed](#) to thousands of downstream customers, was an early example.

There were several others this year, including one in January in which an Iran-backed actor compromised an Israeli cloud services provider to try and infiltrate that company's downstream customers. In another, a Lebanon-based group called Polonium gained access to several Israeli defense and legal organizations via their cloud services providers.

The growing attacks on the IT services supply chain represented a shift away from the usual focus that nation-state groups have had on the software supply chain, Microsoft noted.

Microsoft's recommended measures for mitigating exposure to these threats include reviewing and auditing upstream and downstream service provider relationships, delegating privileged access

management responsible, and enforcing least privileged access as needed. The company also recommends that companies review access for partner relationships that are unfamiliar or have not been audited, enable logging, review all authentication activity for VPNs and remote access infrastructure, and enable MFA for all accounts.

An Uptick in Zero-Days

One notable trend that Microsoft observed is that nation-state groups are spending significant resources to evade the security protections that organizations have implemented to defend against sophisticated threats.

"Much like enterprise organizations, adversaries began using advancements in automation, cloud infrastructure, and remote access technologies to extend their attacks against a wider set of targets," Microsoft said.

The adjustments included new ways to rapidly exploit unpatched vulnerabilities, expanded techniques for breaching corporations, and increased use of legitimate tools and open source software to obfuscate malicious activity.

One of the most troubling manifestations of the trend is the increasing use among nation-state actors of zero-day vulnerability exploits in their attack chain. Microsoft's research showed that patches were released for 41 zero-day vulnerabilities between July 2021 and June 2022.

According to Microsoft, China-backed threat actors have been especially proficient at finding and discovering zero-day exploits recently. The company attributed the trend to a new China regulation that went into effect in September 2021; it requires organizations in the country to report any vulnerabilities they discover to a Chinese government authority for review before disclosing the information with anyone else.

Examples of zero-day threats that fall into this category include [CVE-2021-35211](#), a remote code execution flaw in SolarWinds Serv-U software that was [widely exploited](#) before being patched in July 2021; [CVE-2021-40539](#), a [critical authentication bypass vulnerability](#) in Zoho ManageEngine ADSelfService Plus, patched last September; and [CVE-2022-26134](#), a vulnerability in [Atlassian Confluence Workspaces](#) that a Chinese threat actor was actively exploiting before a patch became available in June.

"This new regulation might enable elements in the Chinese government to stockpile reported vulnerabilities toward weaponizing them," Microsoft warned, adding that this should be viewed as a major step in the use of zero-day exploits as a state priority.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/04 Yanluowang ransomware gang goes dark
SOURCE	https://www.techtarget.com/searchsecurity/news/252526938/Yanluowang-ransomware-gang-goes-dark-after-leaks?&web_view=true
GIST	<p>An internal data leak appears to have caused the Yanluowang ransomware group to close up shop, at least temporarily.</p> <p>The group's data leaks site has been shut down, a signal that ransomware infection and collection operations have been put on hold.</p> <p>The shutdown occurred after an anonymous Twitter account known as Yanluowangleaks exposed a trove of internal information from the ransomware as a service (RaaS) gang, ranging from the source code for its decryption tools and other vital components to internal communications from the group.</p>

The Yanluowangleaks [account](#) said it would continue to post leaked information from the group. The account has not provided any information about its origin or connection with the RaaS group, but it appears set on running them out of business.

The leaks also provided some insight into the inner workings of the group. While the name had initially suggested the operation was based in China or involved Chinese-speaking threat actors, communications from the leaks confirmed that the group's operators are Russian-speaking individuals.

Also revealed in the report was a look into how the ransomware community views high-profile news regarding other crews, such as Russian law enforcement's [REvil arrests](#) in January.

"I think it shines some really interesting light into the growing concerns ransomware actors have with both security researchers doxing threat actors and also the Russian FSB [Federal Security Service]," said Colin Cowie, threat researcher with Sophos' Managed Threat Response team.

"There is an interesting point in the leaks where some of the threat actors discuss the FSB raid on REvil and speculate on if it's a trend or just media hype," Cowie told TechTarget Editorial.

The Yanluowang ransomware leaks follow the closure of the Conti ransomware gang earlier this year after a [similar series of data leaks](#) affected the RaaS group. The Yanluowang leaks also come at a time when [ransomware levels appear to be on the rise](#) and a host of new ransomware crews are looking to fill the void created by the takedowns and disbanding of other high-profile ransomware crews.

However, the apparent closure of Yanluowang is unlikely to cause a significant decrease in overall ransomware attacks. Cowie said that in the overall ransomware pond, Yanluowang is a minnow.

"In the grand scheme of things, I don't think this leak will have a large impact on the tempo of ransomware threat actors currently," he said. "I believe Yanluowang is one of the smaller players out there."

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/04 FBI: hacktivist DDoS attacks minor impact
SOURCE	https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/fbi-hacktivist-ddos-attacks-had-minor-impact-on-critical-orgs/?&web_view=true
GIST	<p>The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) said on Friday that distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) attacks coordinated by hacktivist groups have a minor impact on the services they target.</p> <p>As the law enforcement agency explained in a private industry notification issued today, this happens because they target public-facing infrastructure like websites instead of the actual services, leading to limited disruption.</p> <p>"Coinciding with the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the FBI is aware of Pro-Russian hacktivist groups employing DDoS attacks to target critical infrastructure companies with limited success," the agency said.</p> <p>"These attacks are generally opportunistic in nature and, with DDoS mitigation steps, have minimal operational impact on victims; however, hacktivists will often publicize and exaggerate the severity of the attacks on social media.</p> <p>"As a result, the psychological impact of DDoS attacks is often greater than the disruption of service."</p> <p>Such groups commonly target high-profile or critical infrastructure organizations like financial institutions, emergency services, airports, and government, health, and medical facilities.</p> <p>By taking down their websites, the hacktivists aim to increase their credibility and "falsely assert greater impact or disruption than what occurred."</p>

DDoS attacks on critical and govt organizations in the U.S.

In one recent example of such an incident, the pro-Russian hacktivist group KillNet claimed an attack against [the websites of several major airports across the U.S.](#)

The DDoS attacks overwhelmed the servers hosting these sites, making it impossible for travelers to book airport services or get updates about their scheduled flights.

Notable examples of airport websites inaccessible during the incident included:

- The Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport (ATL), one of the country's more significant air traffic hubs in U.S.
- The Los Angeles International Airport (LAX)
- The Chicago O'Hare International Airport (ORD)

While these DDoS attacks had no impact on flights, they still had an adverse effect on a crucial economic sector, delaying associated services.

One week before, the same group also [attacked U.S. government websites](#) in Colorado, Kentucky, and Mississippi, with moderate success, knocking some of them offline for a short time.

Killnet also [claimed to have taken down](#) CISA's Protected Critical Infrastructure Information Management System website on Friday after its attacks on the U.S. Treasury in early October [were thwarted](#) before affecting the agency's infrastructure.

A week ago, CISA, the FBI, and MS-ISAC published a [joint advisory](#) to provide defenders with info on reducing the likelihood and impact of DDoS attacks.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/04 Robin Banks phishing back in service
SOURCE	https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/robin-banks-phishing-service-returns-to-steal-banking-accounts/?&web_view=true
GIST	<p>The Robin Banks phishing-as-a-service (PhaaS) platform is back in action with infrastructure hosted by a Russian internet company that offers protection against distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) attacks.</p> <p>Robin Banks faced operational disruption in July 2022, when researchers at IronNet exposed the platform as a highly threatening phishing service targeting Citibank, Bank of America, Capital One, Wells Fargo, PNC, U.S. Bank, Santander, Lloyds Bank, and the Commonwealth Bank.</p> <p>Cloudflare immediately blacklisted the platform's frontend and backend, abruptly stopping ongoing phishing campaigns from cybercriminals paying a subscription for using the PhaaS platform.</p> <p>A new report from IronNet warns of the return of Robin Banks and highlights the measures its operators have taken to better hide and protect the platform from researchers.</p> <p>Among the new features are bypassing multi-factor authentication (MFA) and a redirector that helps avoid detection.</p> <p>Robin Banks reloaded</p> <p>To get their service back online, Robin Bank's operators turned to DDoS-Guard, a Russian internet services provider with a long history of controversial business exchanges, some of its customers being Hamas, Parler, HKLeaks, and, more recently, Kiwi Farms.</p> <p>To prevent outsiders from accessing the phishing panel, Robin Banks has now added two-factor authentication for customer accounts.</p>

Additionally, all discussions between core administrators are now done through a private Telegram channel.

New redirector

One of the new features that IronNet's analysts discovered in Robin Banks is the use of 'Adspect,' a third-party cloaker, bot filter, and ad tracker.

PhaaS platforms use tools like Adspect to direct valid targets to phishing sites while redirecting scanners and unwanted traffic to benign websites, thus evading detection.

IronNet comments that Adspect does not advertise itself as a phishing aid; however, its services are promoted on several dark web forums and on Telegram channels dedicated to phishing.

MFA bypassing

Robin Banks developers have also implemented the '[Evilginx2](#)' reverse proxy for 'adversary-in-the-middle' (AiTM) attacks and steal cookies containing authentication tokens.

Evilginx2 is [a reverse-proxy tool](#) that establishes communication between the victim and the real service's server, forwarding login requests and credentials and capturing the session cookie in transit.

This helps the phishing actors bypass the MFA mechanism because they can use the captured cookies to log into an account as if they were the owner.

Robin Banks sells this new MFA-bypassing feature separately, and advertises that it works with Google, Yahoo, and Outlook 'phislets'.

The fact that Robin Banks persists by relying exclusively on readily available tools and services proves that PhaaS platforms can be built by anyone determined enough.

The wide [availability of these platforms](#) opens the door to less technical cybercriminals, allowing them to launch powerful phishing attacks and bypass MFA to steal valuable accounts.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/06 Russia restarts trolls, bots ahead midterms
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/06/technology/russia-misinformation-midterms.html
GIST	<p>The user on Gab who identifies as Nora Berka resurfaced in August after a yearlong silence on the social media platform, reposting a handful of messages with sharply conservative political themes before writing a stream of original vitriol.</p> <p>The posts mostly denigrated President Biden and other prominent Democrats, sometimes obscenely. They also lamented the use of taxpayer dollars to support Ukraine in its war against invading Russian forces, depicting Ukraine's president as a caricature straight out of Russian propaganda.</p> <p>The fusion of political concerns was no coincidence.</p> <p>The account was previously linked to the same secretive Russian agency that interfered in the 2016 presidential election and again in 2020, the Internet Research Agency in St. Petersburg, according to the cybersecurity group Recorded Future.</p> <p>It is part of what the group and other researchers have identified as a new, though more narrowly targeted, Russian effort ahead of Tuesday's midterm elections. The goal, as before, is to stoke anger among conservative voters and to undermine trust in the American electoral system. This time, it also appears intended to undermine the Biden administration's extensive military assistance to Ukraine.</p>

“It’s clear they are trying to get them to cut off aid and money to Ukraine,” said Alex Plitsas, a former Army soldier and Pentagon information operations official now with Providence Consulting Group, a business technology company.

The campaign — using accounts that pose as enraged Americans like Nora Berka — have added fuel to the most divisive political and cultural issues in the country today.

It has specifically targeted Democratic candidates in the most contested races, including the Senate seats up for grabs in Ohio, Arizona and Pennsylvania, calculating that a Republican majority in the Senate and the House of Representatives could help the Russian war effort.

The campaigns show not only how vulnerable the American political system remains to foreign manipulation but also how purveyors of disinformation have [evolved and adapted](#) to efforts by the major social media platforms to remove or play down false or deceptive content.

Last month, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency issued [an alert](#) warning of the threat of disinformation spread by “dark web media channels, online journals, messaging applications, spoofed websites, emails, text messages and fake online personas.” The disinformation could include claims that voting data or results had been hacked or compromised.

The agencies urged people not to like, discuss or share posts online from unknown or distrustful sources. They did not identify specific efforts, but social media platforms and researchers who track disinformation have recently uncovered a variety of campaigns by Russia, China and Iran.

Recorded Future and two other social media research companies, Graphika and Mandiant, found a number of Russian campaigns that have turned to Gab, Parler, Gettr and other newer platforms that pride themselves on creating unmoderated spaces in the name of free speech.

These are much smaller campaigns than those in the 2016 election, where inauthentic accounts reached millions of voters across the political spectrum [on Facebook](#) and other major platforms. The efforts are no less pernicious, though, in reaching impressionable users who can help accomplish Russian objectives, researchers said.

“The audiences are much, much smaller than on your other traditional social media networks,” said Brian Liston, a senior intelligence analyst with Recorded Future who identified the Nora Berka account. “But you can engage the audiences in much more targeted influence ops because those who are on these platforms are generally U.S. conservatives who are maybe more accepting of conspiratorial claims.”

Many of the accounts the researchers identified were previously used by a news outlet calling itself the Newsroom for American and European Based Citizens. Meta, the owner of Facebook and Instagram, has previously linked the news outlet to the Russian information campaigns centered around [the Internet Research Agency](#).

The network appears to have since disbanded, and many of the social media accounts associated with it went dormant after being publicly identified around the 2020 election. The accounts started becoming active again in August and September, called to action like sleeper cells.

Nora Berka’s account on Gab has many of the characteristics of an inauthentic user, Mr. Liston said. There is no profile picture or identifying biographical details. No one responded to a message sent to the account through Gab.

The account, with more than 8,000 followers, posts exclusively on political issues — not in just one state but across the country — and often spreads false or misleading posts. Most have little engagement but a recent post about the F.B.I. received 43 responses and 11 replies, and was reposted 64 times.

Since September the account has repeatedly shared links to a previously unknown website — electiontruth.net — that Recorded Future said was almost certainly linked to the Russian campaign.

Electiontruth.net's earliest posts date only from Sept. 5; since then, it has posted articles almost daily ridiculing President Biden and prominent Democratic candidates, while criticizing policies regarding race, crime and gender that it said were destroying the United States. "America under Communism" was one typical headline.

The articles all have pseudonyms as bylines, like Andrew J, Truth4Ever and Laura. According to Mr. Liston, the website domain was registered using Bitcoin accounts.

For its contact information, electiontruth.net lists a cafe inside a converted gas station in Cotter, Ark., a town of 900 people on a bend in the White River. The cafe has closed, however, and been replaced by Cotter Bridge Market, a produce shop and deli whose owners said they knew nothing about the website. No one at Election Truth responded to a request for comment submitted through the site.

Mr. Liston said that links to electiontruth.net appeared to be closely coordinated with the accounts on Gab linked to the Russians.

In another campaign, Graphika identified a recent series of cartoons that appeared on Gab, Gettr, Parler and the discussion forum patriots.win. The cartoons, by an artist named "Schmitz," disparaged Democrats in the tightest Senate and governor races.

One targeting Senator Raphael Warnock of Georgia, who is Black, employed racist motifs. Another falsely claimed that Representative Tim Ryan, the Democratic Senate candidate in Ohio, would release "all Fentanyl distributors and drug traffickers" from prison.

The cartoons received little engagement and did not spread virally to other platforms, according to Graphika.

A recurring theme of the new Russian efforts is an argument that the United States under President Biden is wasting money by supporting Ukraine in its resistance to the Russian invasion that began in February.

Nora Berka, for example, posted a doctored photograph in September that showed President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine as a bikini-wearing pole dancer being showered with dollar bills by Mr. Biden.

"As working class Americans struggle to afford food, gas, and find baby formula, Joe Biden wants to spend \$13.7 billion more in aid to Ukraine," the account posted. Not incidentally, that post echoed a theme that has gained some traction among Republican lawmakers and voters who have questioned the delivery of weapons and other military assistance.

"It's no secret that Republicans — that a large portion of Republicans — have questioned whether we should be supporting what has been referred to as foreign adventures or somebody else's conflict," said Graham Brookie, senior director of the Digital Forensics Lab at the Atlantic Council, which has also been tracking foreign influence operations.

The F.B.I. and the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency did not respond to requests for comment about the Russian efforts. Mr. Brookie called the revived accounts "recidivist behavior." Gab did not respond to a request for comment.

As before, it may be hard to measure the exact impact of these accounts on voters come Tuesday. At a minimum, they contribute to what Edward P. Perez, a board member with the OSET Institute, a nonpartisan election security organization, called "manufactured chaos" in the country's body politic.

	<p>While Russians in the past sought to build large followings for their inauthentic accounts on the major platforms, today's campaigns could be smaller and yet still achieve a desired effect — in part because the divisions in American society are already such fertile soil for disinformation, he said.</p> <p>“Since 2016, it appears that foreign states can afford to take some of the foot off the gas,” Mr. Perez, who previously worked at Twitter, said, “because they have already created such sufficient division that there are many domestic actors to carry the water of disinformation for them.”</p>
	Return to Top

HEADLINE	11/05 White House deleted tweet: violated law?
SOURCE	https://www.newsmax.com/newsfront/biden-twitter-cpi/2022/11/05/id/1095010/
GIST	<p>The White House deleted a tweet Wednesday crediting President Joe Biden's leadership for a large increase in Social Security benefits that was actually an automatically triggered cost-of-living increase tied to inflation and based on a 1972 law. In doing so, it may have violated the Presidential Records Act, according to a government watchdog group.</p> <p>In a Friday letter to U.S. National Archives Records Administration head Debra Wall and Attorney General Merrick Garland, among others, Protect the Public's Trust, a nonpartisan group, said it is calling for a federal investigation regarding the now-deleted tweet based on the same laws that caused Garland and the FBI to execute a search warrant on former President Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate in Palm Beach, Florida, earlier this year.</p> <p>"Maintaining and preserving all official records pursuant to the Presidential Records Act is an important duty that is the responsibility of the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration," the letter read. "Outside of the unprecedented reliance on the Act to support a subpoena to search the home of a former U.S. President, the Act and its enforcement have historically received little attention.</p> <p>"However, now that strict enforcement of the Act appears to be a high priority for the Archivist of the United States, and by extension the Department of Justice, we would like to bring to your attention a matter of serious concern as it applies to preserving the historical record of President Joseph Biden."</p> <p>On Tuesday, the White House posted on Twitter: "Seniors are getting the biggest increase in their Social Security checks in 10 years through President Biden's leadership."</p> <p>Users on the site quickly debunked the claim, and Twitter noted alongside the tweet that the increase was triggered automatically from a law signed by former Republican President Richard Nixon, tying benefit increases to the consumer price index.</p> <p>Shortly thereafter, the White House deleted the tweet.</p> <p>In its letter the group said the deletion runs afoul of the Presidential Records Act, which requires 60-day written notice to the Archives before any presidential record is destroyed.</p> <p>"Presidential records may be disposed of if the president submits copies of the intended disposal schedule at least 60 calendar days before the proposed disposal date to the statutorily specified committees (44 U.S.C. §2203(d)). Further, in the event of improper removal or disposal, an investigation must be conducted," the group said, citing the federal law in the letter.</p> <p>White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre told reporters that the reason for the deletion was that the tweet was "incomplete."</p> <p>"The tweet was not complete," she said during a White House press briefing. "Usually when we put out a tweet, we post it with context; and it did not have that context."</p> <p>Despite the reason, the group's director said in the letter that the protocols in place for a document's destruction must be followed.</p>

	"Whether the deleted post was an effort to boost the political prospects of those associated with the president's political party, mal-information that could constitute an attack on America's democratic institutions, or simply an ill-conceived self-promotion effort, the deletion of a public and official presidential record must still follow the destruction process laid out under the Act," Michael Chamberlain, director of Protect the Public's Trust wrote. "This is true regardless of whether the record was 'incomplete' in providing the context to achieve its desired objective."
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	11/04 Scams spike: student loan forgiveness plan
SOURCE	https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/nov/4/officials-warn-spike-scams-related-biden-student-l/
GIST	<p>Americans with college loans are being targeted by a growing number of scams looking to take advantage of confusion over the Biden administration's debt-forgiveness plan, government officials warn.</p> <p>The Federal Communications Commission has pledged to crack down on robocalls asking former students for financial information under the pretext of collecting or forgiving payments.</p> <p>Consumers are "likely talking to a scammer" if a robocall pressures them to provide money, notifies them of a loan forgiveness fee or directs them to any website other than StudentAid.gov, the FCC said in its enforcement advisory.</p> <p>The FCC advisory follows separate alerts that the White House, Federal Trade Commission and Department of Education issued last month as federal agencies work to stop the scams.</p> <p>Officials say fraudsters have flooded U.S. smartphones with calls and texts each time the Biden administration has taken action on student loans. Many of the fake emails, texts, calls and pop-up ads invoke President Biden by name.</p> <p>The scam wave started Aug. 24, when the president announced his plan to forgive up to \$20,000 in debt per borrower for millions of Americans.</p> <p>Zulfikar Ramzan, chief scientist at Boston-based Aura, said the cybersecurity company received reports of scam phone calls "within hours" of the announcement.</p> <p>"Since student loan forgiveness was announced by the Biden administration in August, there has been a stark increase in the number of scam calls, emails and sites that are claiming to offer students and alumni debt forgiveness," Mr. Ramzan said in an email.</p> <p>The scams follow a pattern of seeking the victim's financial information or charging a too-good-to-be-true fee in exchange for debt forgiveness.</p> <p>"Fraudulent parties posing as student loan servicers or the federal government may text you or email you with a link that leads you to a fake site that is designed to steal your personal information," Mr. Ramzan said. "Do not respond."</p> <p>Internet ads touting the scams communicate a false sense of urgency by using slogans such as "act immediately to qualify for student loan forgiveness before the [Biden administration] program is discontinued."</p> <p>In a recent review of 242 Google ads related to student loan forgiveness, the nonprofit Tech Transparency Project found that almost 12% were fraudulent.</p> <p>Security experts say the fraud spikes each time the Biden administration announces changes to the federal student loan process.</p>

On Monday, the Department of Education announced a sweeping overhaul of federal student loan guidelines intended to make debt relief more accessible for borrowers.

The department also has suspended federal student loan payments seven times since pandemic lockdowns started in March 2020, most recently pushing the debt freeze to Dec. 31.

“Scammers like to follow the news and use current events to scam Americans out of their hard-earned money,” said Giulia Porter, a vice president at the anti-spam and text-blocking app RoboKiller.

RoboKiller estimates that 6 billion robocalls and 31 million robotexts related to student loan scams have cost U.S. smartphone users more than \$5 billion.

Ms. Porter said the company first identified an uptick in the scams after the president’s announcement in August. That month, Americans received an estimated 611 million robocalls and 9 million robotexts.

RoboKiller estimates that Americans could see another 5%-10% spike in the number of student loan robocalls by the end of this year.

The FCC said Americans who think they have received a scam call should avoid sharing any personal or financial information, hang up and report it to the federal government.

The agency also wants phone companies to crack down on fraudsters.

“We are calling on the phone companies to heighten their vigilance and take decisive measures to block student loan debt scam robocalls,” FCC Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel said in a statement. “We are ready to take action in every way we can and throw the book at robocallers who illegally target consumers.”

James Quaid, founder and CEO of the anti-fraud carrier GoTalk Wireless, said student loan scammers see smartphones as the easiest way to reach people.

“As many of us are connected to our phones and now use our devices for all services, private and governmental, it’s an easy way for fraudsters to connect with potential victims,” Mr. Quaid said.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/04 How debunked serial killer rumor went viral
SOURCE	https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/uw-expert-explains-how-debunked-serial-killer-rumor-went-viral-social-media/BTWTRYXGWVDGVBGH4BOANVM7WM/
GIST	<p>Awful lies can come with awful consequences.</p> <p>Some of the bad misinformation we’ve seen lately includes a serial killer on the loose in Seattle, the U.S. Postal Service keeping people from voting and someone destroying votes for a big election.</p> <p>All could scare or anger someone — and all are false.</p> <p>The University of Washington’s Center for an Informed Public was created to help identify this kind of bad information.</p> <p>Taylor Agajanian is a research project coordinator with the CIP. She joined KIRO 7 on Friday to talk about the serial killer rumor and other cases of misinformation regarding elections across the country.</p> <p>The serial killer rumor started at the beginning of October, when a young woman was found dead on the side of State Route 509 near Burien. It became part of a lie gone viral — that there was a serial killer on the loose, multiple women had been killed and police weren’t telling the public about it.</p>

	<p>Agajanian said the social media post about the serial killer mentioned the girl found near Burien, but it also mentioned three other murders that supposedly happened beforehand but were never reported on.</p> <p>“I think that was probably one of the things that set my alarm bells off first. It said that the media and the police weren’t telling anybody because they didn’t want to alarm them,” Agajanian said. “But the last one was reported on whereas the first three weren’t ... so that was something that set me off to think that this probably did not happen in the way that the text message is saying that it did.”</p> <p>Agajanian said the first red flag was that she couldn’t find any reporting on the purported murders that happened before the Burien case.</p> <p>She also noticed that people were sharing the social media post, but there wasn’t a lot of conversation around what was actually happening.</p> <p>“I tend to look for actual conversation around it, like what are people actually saying,” Agajanian said. “So I did find that people were sharing it. It seemed to be going around in the same text message form, so in this case it’s what we would call a ‘copy-paste,’ which is just like a copy-paste job, basically.</p> <p>“When you keep seeing it circulate in the same form, in that kind of copy-paste manner, it can often be a sign that it’s not necessarily true.”</p>
Return to Top	

Terrorism, Extremism

[Top of page](#)

HEADLINE	11/07 Somalia prohibits use of name ‘Al Shabab’
SOURCE	https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/africa/2022-11-07-somalia-prohibits-use-of-the-name-al-shabab/
GIST	<p>Somalia’s religious affairs ministry has banned the use of the name al-Shabab – “the youth” in Arabic – and asked the public to refer to the militant group as “Khawarij”, a derogatory term meaning a deviant sect.</p> <p>In a statement, the ministry also prohibited clerics from dealing with the al-Qaeda-allied militants or meeting them.</p> <p>The government said the directive to brand al-Shabab as “Khawarij” was part of the war against the group.</p> <p>It is not the first time the Somali government has coined another name for al-Shabab.</p> <p>In 2015 the government told the media to refer to the militant group as "Ugus", a Somali acronym for "the group that massacres the Somali people".</p> <p>In response, the al-Shabab had threatened to punish anyone, including journalists, who obeyed government directives or used the term.</p> <p>Last month, the federal authorities banned local media outlets from reporting on al-Shabab activities.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	11/07 Al Shabab attacks Somalia military base
SOURCE	https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/somali-army-repulse-al-shabaab-attack-military-base-defence-ministry-2022-11-07/
GIST	MOGADISHU, Nov 7 (Reuters) - Al Shabaab militants attacked a Somali military base in the central Galgaduud region on Monday, the defence ministry and the Islamist group said, days after the area was captured by government forces.

The army repulsed the attack on the base housing national and local troops in Qayib, a village captured from al Shabaab last week, defence ministry spokesperson Abdullahi Ali Anod told the state news agency SONNA.

The attack began with two suicide car bombs at around 5 a.m. (0200 GMT), followed by hours of heavy fighting, Ahmed Hassan, a military officer in the nearby town of Bahdo, told Reuters.

"Al Shabaab torched the telecommunication station of the town, and so it is off the air now. We know we killed five al Shabaab fighters," Hassan said.

One car bomb hit a military truck guarding the base entrance, while the other was blown up outside, he said.

It wasn't immediately clear how many people had been killed in total, but at least nine soldiers were injured, he said.

In a statement, al Shabaab spokesperson Abdiasis Abu Musab said the group launched the assault in Qayib using suicide car bombs before its fighters attacked from different directions. The fighters killed several soldiers and stole weapons and military vehicles, Abu Musab said.

Government forces, supported by clan militias, have made a number of battlefield gains against al Shabaab in the last three months, regaining territory long held by the group.

In response, al Shabaab killed at least 120 people in [twin car bombs](#) at the education ministry in the capital Mogadishu on Oct. 29, the deadliest blasts in five years.

The al Qaeda-linked group has killed tens of thousands of people since 2006 in its fight to overthrow Somalia's Western-backed central government and implement its interpretation of Islamic law.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/05 Yemen military battle AQ stronghold
SOURCE	https://www.yemenonline.info/politics/6864
GIST	<p>Yemeni military forces have advanced into a large valley in Yemen's southern province of Abyan to dislodge Al-Qaeda militants who have long used the area for recruiting, storing arms and staging deadly attacks against government-controlled areas, a military spokesperson said on Saturday.</p> <p>Mohammed Al-Naqeeb, a spokesman for the pro-independence Southern Transitional Council, which commands the military operations, said that forces pushed into Al-Khealah valley, south of Al-Mahfad district, to flush out Al-Qaeda militants who had taken refuge there after being forced out of other strongholds in the past two months.</p> <p>A lengthy column of armed vehicles carrying dozens of soldiers was seen heading into rugged mountainous terrain, meeting little resistance from Al-Qaeda militants who fled before the military arrived.</p> <p>Militants placed explosive devices on roads in an attempt to halt the troops' advance.</p> <p>Three soldiers were killed and four others injured on Friday when their vehicle was destroyed by a roadside bomb, Al-Naqeeb said.</p> <p>A total of 46 government troops have been killed and 136 wounded since the start of the East Arrow military operations against Al-Qaeda in the Abyan and Shabwa provinces two months ago.</p>

Fleeing Al-Qaeda fighters sought sanctuary in the rocky highlands that link Abyan, Al-Bayda and Shabwa, while some hid in Wadi Hadramout, and others crept into Abyan's urban areas, creating "sleeper cells" responsible for killing security and military officials, and laying IEDs.

Security authorities in Al-Mahfad have enforced a nighttime curfew from 8 p.m. to 5 a.m. to restrict Al-Qaeda militants' activities and stop fighters infiltrating urban areas.

"We are dealing with a stealthy, mobile and camouflaged enemy employing insurgent methods," Al-Naqeeb said.

In September, the pro-independence security and military groups launched a coordinated military operation in Abyan and Shabwa provinces to eject Al-Qaeda militants from isolated mountainous areas and valleys that have long served as hiding spots.

Yemeni forces have pushed Al-Qaeda out of Lawder, Moudia and Al-Mahfad in Abyan, as well as the Omaran Valley in Abyan, and have also dislodged militants from Al-Mousenah in Shabwa.

Separately, Yemen's state news agency said on Friday that Iran-backed Houthis launched mortar rounds at two villages controlled by the Yemeni government in the southern city of Taiz, wounding five people.

Two children and a pregnant woman were among those hurt when the mortar barrage struck Salo and Dhabab, south and west of Taiz.

Yemen's army said on Friday that three Houthis were killed and many more injured in clashes west of Taiz as the militants attempted to storm government positions.

Since April 2, when the UN-brokered truce came into force, dozens of civilians and combatants have been killed or injured in Houthi ground operations and bombardments in and around the besieged city.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/05 Militants abduct Niger Delta oil workers
SOURCE	https://www.tvcnews.tv/2022/11/militants-abduct-oil-workers-in-cross-river/
GIST	<p><i>An Armed group suspected to be members of the separatist militants affiliated to the group known as Biafra Nations League, BnL, has allegedly abducted three oil workers in the early hours of Saturday morning in Cross River State.</i></p> <p>The separatists are believed to have also seized the boat belonging to the oil workers and other safety equipment belonging to an oil firm operating in the Atabong area in the Bakassi Peninsula.</p> <p>According to impeccable sources, the oil workers were on their way to work at about 9 am when the armed group accosted and whisked them away.</p> <p>The sources also added that the armed group shot sporadically to scare off security operatives before they sped away with the abducted workers.</p> <p>The security operatives guiding the two vessels who were taken off guard were overwhelmed but no casualties were reported.</p> <p>The leader of BnL, Princewill Chimezie Richards according to TheNationonline has been having running battles with the security agencies was said to have encountered men of the Nigerian Navy in Ibaka in Akwa Ibom State when he and his group were heading back to Bakassi where they majorly operate.</p> <p>Both were reported to have engaged in a fire exchange.</p> <p>The navy operatives attempted to stop the boat carrying Princewill and his men but were resisted.</p>

	<p>Bakassi Chapter leader of the group, Ita Bassey, has confirmed the incident.</p> <p>Public Relations Officer of Cross River State Police Command, Irene Ugbo, said she was not aware of the reported abduction.</p> <p>Theft, sabotage and Other sundry criminalities have reduced the oil production in Nigeria from the heights of 2 Million Barrels Per day to just less than a Million Barrels Per Day production in the last few months.</p> <p>Though the production volume has started growing again following concerted efforts by all stakeholders in the Industry after outcry by Nigerians at the Industrial Scale stealing of the Nations' wealth.</p> <p>Militants who were earlier rehabilitated under the Presidential Amnesty programme have also been threatening to also return to militancy due top alleged broken promises.</p>
	Return to Top

HEADLINE	11/06 Somalia: fleeing militants in bomb attacks
SOURCE	https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/news/east-africa/fleeing-shabaab-throw-bombs-in-somalia-villages-4009222
GIST	<p>Somalia is warning of increased bomb attacks in the country as al-Shabaab militants flee from rural villages where they are losing territory to vigilantes and security forces.</p> <p>Last Saturday, militants claimed a double explosion near the offices of the Federal Ministry of Education, targeting traffic and crowds of people that pass through the nearby roundabout in Mogadishu.</p> <p>It was not the first attack, but was the heaviest in five years. At least 100 people died and another 300 were wounded, official reports from the Federal Ministry of Health show.</p> <p>“Today's cruel and cowardly terrorist attack on innocent people by the morally bankrupt and criminal al Shabaab group cannot discourage us,” Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mahmoud said on the attacks.</p> <p>“This attack will further strengthen our resolve to defeat them once and for all. Our government and brave people will continue to defend Somalia against evil.”</p> <p>More vigilance</p> <p>For the government, it now means more vigilance in urban areas where the focus of vigilantes has been less. Since September when the federal government authorised organised militia groups to fight alongside Somali national forces, significant territory has been won back from al Shabaab in the villages.</p> <p>“The country is at war, and at the moment I am talking to you, there is a war which will not stop until these criminals are all finished,” he told journalists in Mogadishu. “Our heroic troops are committed to it and I want to assure you we will not stop.”</p> <p>The October 29 explosions came on the fifth anniversary of a car bomb that killed more than 570 people at the same Zoobe Junction, showing a tendency for Shabaabs to mark anniversaries with new attacks.</p> <p>Three-pronged attack</p> <p>Abdulaziz Ali Ibrahim, a former spokesman of the Somalia federal government, said al-Shabaab is reacting to the loss of territories in the countryside since President Mahmoud came to power in May.</p> <p>He says that the militants have lost the revenue they derived from illegal taxation and that they are also reacting to current efforts by the government to debunk their ideology.</p> <p>At his inauguration, President Mahmoud promised to clean the country of terrorist elements.</p>

He has since launched a three-pronged attack that includes military, shutting down al Shabaab revenue sources and mobilising the masses to debunk the militant's ideology.

Federal states

Unlike his predecessor, Muhammed Abdullahi Farmaajo, who had problems with Jubbaland and Puntland, President Mahmoud has not only appointed a prime minister from Jubbaland but is reaching out to all the five federal states to cooperate in the fight against the militants.

Abdalla Ahmed Ibrahim, the director of the East Africa Centre for Research and Strategic Studies, says that the choice of prime minister, Hamza Abdi Barre, was a wise move by the president who is keen on forging a united front.

Currently, al Shabaab is feeling the heat as President Mahmoud has deployed troops in Hiraan, Galmudug and Bay regions. However, the militants still control large rural central and southern Somalia territories.

Illegal taxes

A 2020 UN report says the militants collect more illegal taxes than the government, close to \$15 million per month, especially from businesses, exports and imports.

The government has introduced the Financial Reporting Centre, an interagency financial unit that works with banks and remittance companies such as Dahabshiil to expose movement of money to al Shabaab and to protect the business community from coercion by the militants.

Abdullahi Warfar, an advisor on diplomacy to the Somalia ministry of Foreign Affairs, says the new approach to dismantle al-Shabaab's sources of income is a major blow to the militant group.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/05 UK right-wing extremism motivated bomber
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/article/europe-business-immigration-migration-terrorism-1f4d9e1a1e0433883c15659c35813fab
GIST	<p>LONDON (AP) — A man who firebombed an immigration processing center in southern England last week was motivated by right-wing ideology, U.K. counterterrorism police said Saturday.</p> <p>Andrew Leak, 66, is believed to have killed himself after throwing two or three incendiary devices at the Western Jet Foil site in the port city of Dover on Oct. 30. While the flames were quickly extinguished, two people were injured in the attack and more than 700 migrants had to be relocated.</p> <p>Investigators have spoken to a number of witnesses and recovered evidence, including “digital media devices,” that suggest Leak was motivated by extreme right-wing ideology, Counter Terrorism Policing South East said in a statement.</p> <p>“Whilst there are strong indications that mental health was likely a factor, I am satisfied that the suspect’s actions were primarily driven by an extremist ideology,” said Tim Jacques, senior national coordinator for counterterrorism policing. “This meets the threshold for a terrorist incident.”</p> <p>Britain’s asylum system is struggling to keep up with a sharp increase in the number of migrants crossing the English Channel from France in small boats. About 40,000 people have made the hazardous journey already this year, up from 28,000 in all of 2021 and 8,500 in 2020.</p> <p>The government, led by the center-right Conservative Party, is under pressure to solve the problem after promising to cut immigration and regain control of the country’s borders after the U.K. left the European Union.</p>

	In an effort to discourage people from making the risky crossing, the government has announced a controversial plan to send those who arrive in small boats on a one-way journey to Rwanda. The program is on hold in the face of legal challenges from critics who say it is immoral and impractical.
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	11/06 Somalia military training camp bombing
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/article/africa-police-reform-somalia-mogadishu-al-shabab-954a52b2ab7d57e1a8eaf56b3fd5c334
GIST	<p>MOGADISHU, Somalia (AP) — Military officers in Somalia say at least five people were killed and 11 others wounded when a suicide bomber detonated explosives at the front gate of a military training camp in Mogadishu on Saturday evening.</p> <p>The al-Shabab extremist group claimed responsibility for the attack at the camp that has been targeted multiple times in the past.</p> <p>Gen. Odawa Yusuf, chief of Somalia’s defense forces, told state media the bomber had been pretending to be a recruit at the General Dhaga-Badan military training camp in Wadajir district.</p> <p>A military officer, Abdirahman Ali, told The Associated Press that “there were some fatalities for both the civilians walking along the street and the recruits.”</p> <p>The camp is located near the large Turkish military base in Somalia.</p>
Return to Top	

Suspicious, Unusual

[Top of page](#)

HEADLINE	11/06 SFD changed policy over fake complaint
SOURCE	https://mynorthwest.com/3699263/rantz-seattle-fire-department-changed-policy-over-hoax-racism-complaint/
GIST	<p>The Seattle Fire Department (SFD) changed a policy over what a complainant now admits was a hoax. Even after Seattle Fire learned the complaint was fake, the department refused to reverse course.</p> <p>In a June 13 memo, the Jason Rantz Show on KTTH exclusively reported that Seattle Fire chief Harold Scoggins banned the phrase “brown out” to describe understaffed department units. The new policy now says “units understaffed” because Seattle Fire received one complaint claiming “brown out” is racist.</p> <p>But “brown out” is not a racist term. And the man who made the complaint, Armando Castillo, explained to the Jason Rantz Show on KTTH that he made the whole thing up, in part, “to highlight the divisive nature in which the administration has been dismantling the SFD family structure throughout 2021 and 2022.”</p> <p>Castillo isn’t his real name either, another hoax. He said he is an internal Seattle Fire source that wishes to stay anonymous.</p> <p>The fake complaint</p> <p>After Castillo sent several aggressive complaints, Seattle Fire agreed to stop using the term “brown out.” Castillo introduced himself to Seattle Fire and Seattle Office of Civil Rights as a 27-year-old “proud Latino currently living in the South Park neighborhood.” He complained via email that the “term brown out lacks cultural sensitivity. It’s time for a change!”</p> <p>The Department took him seriously.</p>

“Concerns were raised that the term ‘brown out’ has negative connotations for communities of color. This change has been made to reaffirm SFD’s commitment and mission to serve all communities with dignity and respect,” Scoggins wrote in a memo.

The Jason Rantz Show on KTTH emailed Castillo after learning of his email via a public disclosure request. He responded by explaining that the whole complaint was a hoax.

Seattle Fire isn’t backing down

The Jason Rantz Show on KTTH informed Seattle Fire of Castillo’s allegations. Did they vet the complaint or complainant? Nope.

“The email received by the person who identified themselves as Armando Castillo was accepted by the department as an official complaint. It is not a department practice to further vet community members who submit complaints,” a spokesperson told the Jason Rantz Show on KTTH.

Will they reverse the policy now that no one actually finds the term racist? Also no.

“The Fire Chief stands by his decision to change the term to ‘unstaffed units,’” the spokesperson said.

SFD says it has not had additional contact with the complainant since the initial kerfuffle over the phrase.

Divisive Seattle Fire chief

Castillo says Scoggins has been tearing the department apart, echoing the concern of several firefighters speaking anonymously to the Jason Rantz Show on KTTH.

“We had all thought we worked for a tight-knit family, but it turns out we are currently working for a poorly run business! We watched an agenda-driven administration try to divide us on race, religion, and vaccination. Some of us feel the administration has pushed its own agenda of bias to promote the business of RSJI. The family unit from the core of SFD is a healthy loving inclusive environment!”

RSJI is the city’s Racial and Social Justice Initiative. It [promotes far-left concepts about white supremacy culture](#) and racism.

One [training session](#), “Internalized Racial Superiority,” offers a look at how “whiteness” gets in the way of people of color. It tells white staff they are “responsible” for racism and endorses the concept of “interrupting whiteness.” They should give up on “guaranteed physical safety” to be “accomplices” in creating an anti-racist society. Only then can they “eliminate racism and create racial equity, justice, and liberation.”

‘We are WOKE to a nightmare’

Castillo, who would not reveal his real identity out of concern he would be outed, explained that “Scoggins has been building walls instead of highlighting the love/brotherhood and sisterhood that is the underlying theme in the Seattle Fire Department.”

He complains that the chief has been “inciting perceived underlying racial tensions throughout the department with his perceived bias!”

Castillo said he’s a longtime member of Seattle Fire. He says he has never worked for a chief “more divisive than our current.”

“We are WOKE to a nightmare and hopefully this will help to bring the pendulum back to neutral,” Castillo emailed the Jason Rantz Show on KTTH.

Banning a term based on a phony complaint of racism — meant to highlight a department’s wokeness — certainly makes Castillo’s case.

HEADLINE	11/06 Melting glaciers yield secrets too quickly
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/the-worlds-melting-glaciers-are-yielding-up-their-secrets-too-quickly/
GIST	<p>FORCLE GLACIER, Switzerland — At around 8,000 feet above sea level, Switzerland’s Forcle Glacier has for thousands of years been deeply ensconced in a frigid mountain valley overlooked by some of Europe’s highest peaks.</p> <p>To early human hunters who climbed these heights, it must have seemed as if its snow-covered body of ice would forever keep the valley locked in its frozen grip. Whatever was lost on these rocks — iron spears, leather shoes or rudimentary straps — was swallowed by the ice, never to reappear.</p> <p>But when the Swiss archaeologist Romain Andenmatten arrived here on a recent September day, the ground was so muddy and moist that his shoes sank deep into it. On the ground in front of him lay a leather strap, rimmed with gleaming ice crystals, its holes filled with fine gravel.</p> <p>The last time a human held it may have been over 1,000 years ago.</p> <p>As climate change melts glaciers at unprecedented speeds, such ancient artifacts are emerging from the shrinking layers of ice around the world. For archaeologists, this is both a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and a daunting task as the planet’s rapid warming is exposing objects faster than they can be saved.</p> <p>When the artifacts emerge from the ice after decades or centuries, many are so well preserved that they seem to have been frozen just hours earlier. European researchers recently grew plants from 100-year-old seeds that had been discovered “frozen in time” in a World War I-era bunker on the Swiss-Italian border. Some of the most scientifically valuable finds are organic, such as wood and leather, which would normally decompose without the ice.</p> <p>But because of the speed at which the earth’s glaciers are melting — temperatures are rising two times faster in the Alps than elsewhere — researchers worry that they do not have enough time. Large portions of the collective history of about a third of the world’s population in mountain areas are “melting away,” said archaeologist Marcel Cornelissen.</p> <p>The emergence of an object from the ice triggers a race to preserve it before it decomposes. “The mountains are starting to move,” said Regula Gubler, a Swiss archaeologist.</p> <p>A ‘hurricane’ of melting</p> <p>The sound of a rockfall echoed through the valley of the Forcle Glacier as Andenmatten and a colleague, archaeology student Tristan Allegro, 25, slowly trekked across ice covered by a thin layer of dark dust, rocks and soil.</p> <p>The only other sound in these heights was the hum of commercial jets that left their white contrails in the cloudless skies.</p> <p>“This glacier once cut through the entire valley,” said Andenmatten, pointing at a barren and ice-free basin in front of him. But within the next 10 or 20 years, the whole Forcle Glacier could be gone.</p> <p>This year alone, Swiss glaciers lost 6 percent of their ice, said glaciologist Matthias Huss, who likens the destructive force of this summer’s heat waves to an Alpine “hurricane.”</p> <p>“We’ve seen an increase in frequency of years with very strong melting over the last decades,” he said. “But what we’ve seen this summer is really completely different from all these previous extreme years.”</p> <p>This year’s ice loss is so far above historical averages that, in theory, it should have been “virtually impossible.”</p>

The additional melting may have prevented some of Europe's mighty rivers from drying out during the cascade of heat waves this year. But once a critical threshold of melting has been crossed in the future, the lack of glacier water will be felt across the continent.

The ice is "a dead man walking," said Lars Holger Pilo, an archaeologist in Norway.

Treasures of the ice

A retreat of glaciers isn't necessarily unnatural. They have always grown during extremely cold periods and shrunk when those cold stretches ended. Some natural melting was expected in Europe after the last "Little Ice Age" ended in the 19th century.

But as carbon dioxide emissions surged over the past century, human factors began to quicken what had been expected to be a gradual natural retreat — and turned ice patches and glaciers into sites of archaeological and sometimes criminal investigations.

As the melting was speeding up in the early 1990s, early spectacular discoveries awakened the interest of researchers.

Late in summer 1991, two German hikers on the Italian-Austrian border found the frozen body of a man who was initially assumed to be the victim of a recent accident. He later became known as Ötzi, or "Iceman" — a 5,000-year-old murder victim who had been killed with an arrow and had been preserved in the ice.

Over the following decades, Ötzi became perhaps the most carefully investigated body in history, allowing researchers to draw conclusions about historical climates, early human habits and genetics.

The more the ice melts, the deeper archaeologists advance into some of its oldest layers — and into the past.

"The finds have definitely gotten older," said Pilo, the researcher in Norway, who has been coming across artifacts that radiocarbon dating shows are thousands of years old.

Among the finds have been an over 3,500-year-old Swiss leather shoe and a 10,000-year-old Alpine glacier mine where hunters once extracted rock crystals to make arrowheads and other kinds of blades. In Norway, a 1,300-year-old ski that predates the Vikings was so well preserved that scientists were able to reproduce a functioning copy and race down the slopes with it.

Around half of all global ice discoveries that are medieval or older have been made in Norway, which has a particularly high accumulation of ice that does not move. Archaeologists prefer searching for artifacts in such deposits because — unlike in glaciers — the lack of movement prevents the items from being ground up and "spat out," said Gubler, the Swiss scientist. In the Swiss Alps, the most promising areas of discovery are the ice patches and snowfields around the glaciers, and not the glaciers themselves.

The discoveries so far may be only a glimpse into what could be found. Pilo and his colleagues in Norway's Innlandet county have a list of around 150 potential sites that they have not yet been able to examine.

For Pilo and many of his colleagues, the challenge is no longer identifying sites where discoveries are likely but prioritizing those that are most important for salvaging.

"For every patch we find, there are probably dozens that go unnoticed and quietly melt away — and the cultural heritage embedded in them is out there under the August sun, rotting," said Nicholas Jarman, an archaeologist for the U.S. National Park Service in New Mexico who uses much of his annual leave to hunt for artifacts in glaciers.

“It’s a small reflection of the broader societal challenge that we’re faced with,” he said. “Will I be looking back in 20 years, wishing that I’d done more?”

‘I wonder if we’re too late’

In Switzerland, Andenmatten and his colleague hope that crowdsourcing can help them rise to the challenge.

They released a smartphone app last year that lets anyone share photos and the GPS coordinates of potential finds. It allows the scientists to make a first assessment of the significance of a discovery before they embark on a sometimes dayslong hike.

Allegro, the archaeology student, had used the app to alert the regional archaeology authority when he made the first discoveries on the Forcle glacier this year. The office asked him to join the search team.

As the sun rose behind the mountains, he and Andenmatten put on UV face masks and hats to shield themselves from the burning rays of the sun. By the time they had shrugged off their coats, the glacier streamlet that was still covered by a thin layer of ice in the morning had turned into a bubbling stream of melting water.

Equipped with a GPS receiver and a hammer, the two researchers scanned their surroundings, looking for anything that appeared out of place.

They didn’t have to search for long. Within a few hours, their black plastic bags were filled with dozens of items of crafted wood and the leather strap.

Every time they decided it was time to begin their descent, the scientists stumbled upon a new artifact.

The finds in this part of Switzerland over the years have included carved wooden statues that probably date back over 2,500 years to the Iron Age, a pistol and clothes that may have belonged to a 16-century mercenary, and a 3,500-year-old pair of leather shoes.

But the influx of artifacts could come to an abrupt end one day.

Swiss researcher Gubler has hiked up to the Schnidejoch, a mountain pass about 9,000 feet above the sea level, almost every year for the past decade and says it used to be an archaeological treasure chest.

But when Gubler returned this summer, she found that all the ice had disappeared.

“It all happened very fast,” she said.

Some researchers are noticing a marked decline in the number of discoveries, at least in some areas, as ice fields start to disappear.

“I wonder if we’re too late,” archaeologist Cornelissen said.

Working in such proximity to some of the most visible effects of climate change can be disheartening, researchers say.

Jarman, the New Mexico-based researcher, says that when he is in the field, focusing on the task at hand is easy. Because only a few weeks or even days every year offer weather suitable for exploration, being in the field leaves little time for reflection.

The more difficult moments tend to be the ones at home, when the archaeological “exhilaration and excitement is tempered with this sober awareness,” Jarman said. “Like you’re witnessing the end of something.”

HEADLINE	11/06 UN: last 8yrs were 8 hottest ever recorded
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/nov/06/climate-crisis-past-eight-years-were-the-eight-hottest-ever-says-un
GIST	<p>The past eight years were the eight hottest ever recorded, a new UN report has found, indicating the world is now deep into the climate crisis. The internationally agreed 1.5C limit for global heating is now “barely within reach”, it said.</p> <p>The report, by the UN’s World Meteorological Organization (WMO), sets out how record high greenhouse gases in the atmosphere are driving sea level and ice melting to new highs and supercharging extreme weather from Pakistan to Puerto Rico.</p> <p>The stark assessment was published on the opening day of the UN’s Cop27 climate summit in Egypt and as the UN secretary-general warned that “our planet is on course to reach tipping points that will make climate chaos irreversible”.</p> <p>The WMO estimates that the global average temperature in 2022 will be about 1.15C above the pre-industrial average (1850-1900), meaning every year since 2016 has been one of the warmest on record.</p> <p>For the past two years, the natural La Niña climate phenomenon has actually kept global temperatures lower than they would otherwise have been. The inevitable switch back to El Niño conditions will see temperatures surge even higher in future, on top of global heating.</p> <p>The WMO report said:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide are at record levels in the atmosphere as emissions continue. The annual increase in methane, a potent greenhouse gas, was the highest on record. • The sea level is now rising twice as fast as 30 years ago and the oceans are hotter than ever. • Records for glacier melting in the Alps were shattered in 2022, with an average of 13ft (4 metres) in height lost. • Rain – not snow – was recorded on the 3,200m-high summit of the Greenland ice sheet for the first time. • The Antarctic sea-ice area fell to its lowest level on record, almost 1m km² below the long-term average. <p>“The greater the warming, the worse the impacts,” said the WMO secretary-general, Prof Petteri Taalas.</p> <p>“We have such high levels of CO2 in the atmosphere now that the lower 1.5C [target] of the Paris Agreement is barely within reach. It’s already too late for many glaciers [and] sea level rise is a long-term and major threat to many millions of coastal dwellers and low-lying states.”</p> <p>António Guterres, UN secretary-general, said ahead of Cop27: “Emissions are still growing at record levels. That means our planet is on course for reaching tipping points that will make climate chaos irreversible. We need to move from tipping points to turning points for hope.”</p> <p>A series of recent reports signalled how near the planet is to climate catastrophe, with “no credible pathway to 1.5C in place” and the current level of action set to see no fall in emissions and global temperature rise by a devastating 2.5C.</p> <p>Rising global heating is making extreme weather more severe and more frequent around the world. The WMO report highlighted the drought in east Africa, where rainfall has been below average for four consecutive seasons, the longest in 40 years. About 19 million people are now suffering a food crisis.</p> <p>The WMO analysis also reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devastating flooding in Pakistan, with at least 1,700 deaths and 7.9 million people displaced. • A series of cyclones that battered southern Africa, which hit Madagascar hardest with torrential rain.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exceptional heatwaves and droughts in the northern hemisphere, with China enduring its longest heatwave on record, the UK passing 40C for the first time, and European rivers including the Rhine, Loire and Danube falling to critically low levels. Hurricane Ian wreaking extensive damage and loss of life in Cuba and Florida. <p>“All too often, those least responsible for climate change suffer most, but even well-prepared societies this year have been ravaged by extremes,” said Prof Taalas.</p> <p>Prof Mike Meredith, at the British Antarctic Survey, said: “The messages in this report could barely be bleaker – all over our planet, records are being shattered as different parts of the climate system begin to break down. The loss of ice is especially alarming as the impacts on people, societies and economies are huge. If this doesn’t focus the minds of the global leaders at Cop27, I don’t know what will.”</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	11/06 WMO: climate woes bad, getting worse fast
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/article/science-united-nations-antonio-guterres-climate-and-environment-a752dc3850a2cc818b0a58992517f5c7
GIST	<p>SHARM EL-SHEIKH, Egypt (AP) — Earth’s warming weather and rising seas are getting worse and doing so faster than before, the World Meteorological Organization warned Sunday in a somber note as world leaders started gathering for international climate negotiations.</p> <p>“The latest State of the Global Climate report is a chronicle of climate chaos,” United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said. “We must answer the planet’s distress signal with action -- ambitious, credible climate action.”</p> <p>In its annual state of the climate report, the United Nations’ weather agency said that sea level rise in the past decade was double what it was in the 1990s and since January 2020 has jumped at a higher rate than that. Since the decade began, seas are rising at 5 millimeters a year (.2 inches) compared to 2.1 millimeters (.08 inches) in the 1990s.</p> <p>The last eight years have been the warmest on record, the WMO said in a report that didn’t break new ground but was a collection of recent weather trends, data and impacts in one central place.</p> <p>“The melting (of ice) game we have lost and also the sea level rate,” WMO chief Petteri Taalas told The Associated Press. “There are no positive indicators so far.”</p> <p>The only reason that the globe hasn’t broken annual temperature records in the past few years is a rare three-year La Niña weather phenomenon, he said.</p> <p>The data on sea level and average temperatures are nothing compared to how climate change has hit people in extreme weather. The report highlights the summer’s incredible flood in Pakistan that killed more than 1,700 people and displaced 7.9 million, a crippling four-year drought in East Africa that has more than 18 million hungry, the Yangtze River drying to its lowest level in August, and record heat-waves broiling people in Europe and China.</p> <p>“This latest report from the World Meteorological Organization reads like a lab report for a critically ill patient, but in this case the patient is Earth,” said climate scientist Jennifer Francis of the Woodwell Climate Research Center in Cape Cod, who wasn’t part of the report.</p> <p>Levels of heat-trapping carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide all reached record high levels, with potent methane increasing at a record pace, the report said.</p> <p>That means more than just warming temperatures on land. Ice, both Greenland’s ice sheet and the world’s glaciers, are shrinking precipitously, the report said. For the 26th year in a row, Greenland lost ice when</p>

	<p>all types of ice are factored in. The volume of glacier snow in Switzerland dropped by more than one-third from 2001 to 2022, the report said.</p> <p>But 90% of the heat trapped on Earth goes into the ocean and the upper 2000 meters (6561 feet) of the ocean is getting warmer faster. The rate of warming the last 15 years is 67% faster than since 1971, the report said.</p> <p>That ocean heat “will continue to warm in the future – a change which is irreversible on centennial to millennial time scales,” the report said.</p> <p>Outside experts weren’t surprised by the report and said no one should be.</p> <p>“What climate scientists have warned about for decades is upon us. And will continue to worsen without action,” said University of Georgia meteorology professor Marshall Shepherd. “Two things must go away: Climate delayism and speaking about climate change impacts in the future tense. It’s here.”</p>
	Return to Top

HEADLINE	11/04 Govt. pays tribes to move: climate change
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/04/climate/native-americans-relocate-climate-change.html
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON — The Biden administration will give money to five Native American tribes to help them relocate away from rivers and coastlines, potentially creating a model for other communities around the country as the effects of climate change get worse.</p> <p>The funding, which will go to three tribes in Alaska and two in Washington State, marks the start of a new federal program specifically designed to relocate people and homes threatened by climate change. It appears to be the first such program in American history.</p> <p>“We’re definitely grateful,” said Nate Tyler, the treasurer of the Makah Tribe, whose coastal reservation in Washington State is increasingly exposed to flooding. The tribe will get \$2.1 million to help replace its aging health clinic with a new building on higher land, farther from the Pacific.</p> <p>The awards represent a shift in U.S. climate adaptation policy, toward what climate experts call “managed retreat” — the movement of buildings and infrastructure away from areas that are especially vulnerable to the consequences of global warming. That approach reflects the growing acknowledgment, among residents and policymakers alike, that some places are becoming either too difficult or too expensive to protect.</p> <p>The relocation program could become a template for other federal agencies that work on disaster recovery. Those agencies, including the Federal Emergency Management Agency, are reconsidering the strategy of repeatedly rebuilding communities in places where they are vulnerable to floods, hurricanes and other threats.</p> <p>But the relocation awards also present a challenge to government officials, who must decide which communities get funding to retreat. More than half the tribes that applied for the relocation program were rejected.</p> <p>The Department of the Interior, which runs the program, declined to discuss its decision criteria.</p> <p>The federal government has tried relocating communities threatened by climate change before. In 2016, the Obama administration provided \$48 million to move a village in coastal Louisiana. This new program represents the first long-term effort to specifically relocate tribes threatened by climate change.</p> <p>Many tribes were forced onto marginal or inhospitable land more than a century ago by the United States government, leaving them particularly vulnerable to the effects of global warming.</p>

At least 11 tribes applied for relocation funding under the new \$130 million program, according to records obtained by The New York Times through a public-records request. Six were rejected.

The winning tribes include the Akiak Native Community, a village of fewer than 500 people on the Kuskokwim River in Southwest Alaska. As average temperatures increase, the permafrost is melting, accelerating the erosion of the shoreline and forcing Akiak to pull back from the water.

The Interior Department will give Akiak \$2.7 million. Michael Williams, the chief of the village, said he expected to be able to move 15 to 20 houses with that money. "It's welcome funding," Mr. Williams said.

Nunapitchuk, a village 40 miles west of Akiak facing similar challenges, will get \$2.2 million to relocate. Chefornak, a village on the Kinia River not far from the Bering Sea, will get \$3 million.

In Washington State, the other tribe to win funding, in addition to the Makah Tribe, was the Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe, whose reservation is on the northern tip of Kitsap Peninsula, across the Puget Sound from Seattle. Flooding and coastal erosion are increasingly threatening the tribe's buildings.

The tribe will get \$2.1 million to demolish three homes near the water and rebuild them on safer land, according to the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

The money from the new program won't be enough to fully fund the relocation of tribes, the cost of which can run into the tens or hundreds of millions of dollars. But when coupled with other sources of funding, it can make a meaningful difference, some tribal officials said.

On the northern shore of Washington State, along the Strait of Juan de Fuca, the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe unsuccessfully sought money under the new program to relocate a house away from the water, as well as a laboratory that examines fish and water samples for evidence of climate change.

The tribe's chairman, W. Ron Allen, was undeterred.

"Unfortunately there were other stronger, higher priorities," said Mr. Allen, adding that the tribe will reapply next year. "We're not discouraged."

[Return to Top](#)

Crime, Criminals

[Top of page](#)

HEADLINE	11/06 Chicago club shooting: 1 killed, 3 wounded
SOURCE	https://www.kiro7.com/news/trending/chicago-shooting-1-killed-3-wounded-outside-nightclub/YOBHL5MRLFC43ILARG3GHQCMY/
GIST	<p>CHICAGO — One person was killed and three others were wounded in a shooting outside a Chicago nightclub early Sunday, authorities said.</p> <p>The shooting at the River North nightclub came after a fight and occurred at about 2:10 a.m., WLS-TV reported.</p> <p>According to the Chicago Police Department, a group was ejected from the club and then became involved in a disturbance outside, according to the television station.</p> <p>Police said a 30-year-old man was shot in the chest, WFLD-TV reported. He was taken to Northwestern Memorial Hospital where he was pronounced dead, according to the television station.</p> <p>A 24-year-old man was shot in the leg and was also hospitalized, where he was listed in good condition, WFLD reported.</p>

	<p>Two other victims were also admitted to Northwestern Memorial Hospital, WBBM-TV reported. A 30-year-old man was shot in the shoulder and a 24-year-old woman suffered a wound to her leg, according to the television station. Both are listed in good condition.</p> <p>Chicago police said one person was in custody and two guns were recovered, WBBM reported.</p> <p>An investigation is ongoing.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	11/06 Mental health services in jails worsen
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/mental-health/wait-times-for-mental-health-services-in-wa-jails-worsen-as-fines-spiral/
GIST	<p>GRAYS HARBOR COUNTY — Monday afternoon would typically be quiet in the seaside town of Ocean Shores. Instead, in January of this year, police officers had been dispatched to a local grocery store twice within an hour because of Joshua Marsh.</p> <p>Marsh, 40, was barefoot and without a coat in the middle of winter. The store manager thought he was inebriated and asked him to leave but he refused, according to an Ocean Shores police report. Officers issued him a trespass notice and noted Marsh’s conversation was “nonsensical.” Police were called again after Marsh was found climbing onto a semitruck parked outside.</p> <p>By that evening, Marsh was booked into Grays Harbor County Jail, accused of assaulting officers. He would spend eight months there, waiting to be transferred to a state psychiatric hospital for mental health services.</p> <p>“They forgot about me pretty much,” said Marsh, speaking by phone from Western State Hospital, where he was ultimately moved in late September.</p> <p>Marsh, who still has yet to face trial, is one of hundreds of defendants across Washington state who remain in a legal limbo, jailed while waiting for a psychiatric bed as state hospital wait times balloon in violation of a federal court settlement.</p> <p>Four years after that settlement, referred to as the Trueblood case, the Washington Department of Social and Health Services — the state agency in charge of getting people into mental health services — is still struggling to meet required time frames. In fact, wait times are getting worse, costing hundreds of people in jails, and their loved ones, weeks or months of their lives. The settlement includes fines, so the failure also has cost Washington taxpayers an estimated \$98 million since 2018.</p> <p>“Emergency point”</p> <p>To take someone charged with a crime to trial, the defendant first has to understand why they are being tried. If they don’t understand their charges or can’t assist their attorney, they are evaluated by a mental health professional and usually found incompetent.</p> <p>People in crisis or with a history of mental illness often fall into this category — and that means the court can’t start a trial, let alone issue a verdict.</p> <p>Instead a judge will order the defendant to be “restored.” And once the person is found competent — which usually takes anywhere from 29 to 90 days — they can stand trial.</p> <p>But for years, people would sit in jail, unable to get into a state hospital for these restoration services, and their cases would stall. Advocates argued this violated defendants’ constitutional due-process rights in what became the class action federal lawsuit known as Trueblood v. DSHS in 2014.</p>

Ultimately, a settlement in 2018 laid out deadlines for the state to act: Defendants who were potentially incompetent to stand trial would be evaluated within 14 days, and if necessary receive “restoration services” — usually involving a transfer to a state hospital like Western State, medication and educational services — within seven days after that.

If state officials failed, DSHS would be fined. Money from the settlement would then go to funding diversion programs and triage centers where people in crisis could be dropped off by law enforcement rather than taken to jail.

Currently, an estimated 870 people, in and out of jail, are waiting for these competency and restoration services in Washington state.

Only about half of defendants get a competency evaluation on time, the latest October [report](#) from DSHS shows.

The data also found that people in jails across Washington were waiting an average of nearly 78 days to get restoration services at a state facility. Fewer than 10% of defendants received services within the mandated time frame.

“We are at an emergency point,” said Rebecca Vasquez, a senior deputy prosecutor with the King County Prosecuting Attorney’s Office. “The system is not working.”

The delays have implications for public safety: Wait times have become so long that judges often dismiss cases with misdemeanors or less egregious crimes rather than hold people for months on end without a trial. In King County alone, Vasquez estimates 350 felony cases are waiting for a competency evaluation or restoration treatment. She finds herself carefully sifting through which cases to prioritize.

“I never thought I’d get to the point where I was considering agreeing to dismiss or release defendants charged with lower level assaults,” she said. “But we’re at the point where we are agreeing to dismiss or release some cases involving felony defendants who are at risk of harm to the community.”

Judges, too, are growing impatient with state officials.

At a criminal hearing last month at the King County Superior Court, Judge Johanna Bender shared her frustrations: “Judges like me are scrambling to try to figure out what to do about the fact that folks are not being transported for care at the hospital on their criminal cases.”

“Although [DSHS] has limited resources, the department has pretty consistently failed to steward those resources in an intentional way.”

Ruth Rivas, Marsh’s public defender from Grays Harbor, finds that the wait times are inexcusable in cases like his.

“He’s done all the time he would do,” she said. “Had he been competent and accepted a guilty plea, he’d be out of jail a long time ago.”

Stuck waiting

Marsh grew up in Chelan. After his parents split up, he moved in with his father in Grays Harbor. They both liked to fish and hunt, and Marsh loved caring for animals, especially snakes and ferrets, his mom said. Eventually Marsh started building houses in the region for work.

His mother, Lynda Marsh, said her son doesn’t have a history of mental illness but was in special education programs in school. In recent years, he has had some struggles with his physical health: He uses a colostomy bag — which he has found difficult to keep clean in jail — and experiences seizures that have kept him from full-time employment.

In the past couple of years, Marsh has had a handful of encounters with law enforcement, getting cited for trespassing, disorderly conduct and resisting arrest — a pattern common among people in crisis or who are facing serious mental health challenges. Last year, Ocean Shores police were called when two people working near Marsh's home said he cursed at them and attempted to physically fight. Police ended up hitting Marsh with a stun gun after he punched an officer and failed to follow orders, according to the police report.

During Marsh's arrest in early 2022 outside the grocery store, police say he elbowed an officer in the forehead and made threats while resisting arrest. He was ultimately charged with four counts of assault on officers for that, a subsequent incident at the jail, and the 2021 case at his home.

Marsh told The Seattle Times he doesn't remember anything about the day at the grocery store in January but shared that his father had died two weeks before the incident.

"The only thing I can think of [is] I had a seizure," he said.

An evaluation found Marsh not competent and he was ordered to restoration at Western State Hospital in late February.

It was over six months before he finally got a bed in late September.

Marsh and Rivas, his public defender, said other defendants were transferred to Western State faster, despite arriving after him. Hospital officials have to triage: Those who are sickest are prioritized.

"He just sort of fell right in the middle," said Rivas, "Not competent, but not dangerous enough to get expedited [to a psychiatric facility]. But perhaps perceived by some as too dangerous to go into the community."

When someone like Marsh is held past the legal time frames for services, judges can sanction DSHS with fines ranging from \$500 to \$1,500 a day. Since 2018, DSHS estimates that amounts to \$98 million for its failure to comply with the judge's original order. This money goes to fund mental health programs for people in the criminal legal system.

Judges separately can also issue what are called "compensatory sanctions" that are paid to defendants or someone tasked with their care. Marsh currently has around \$15,000 sitting in his jail account, Rivas said.

According to DSHS, it does not have a full account of sanctions to individual defendants, as they are case-by-case and vary according to judges in each county.

Demand rises

The current situation is one of the ripple effects of underfunding mental and behavioral health services for decades, leaving jails as reluctant mental health providers for many in the system.

State hospital officials see the backlog of cases and point to COVID-19; how it slowed down the courts, forced them to quarantine patients during outbreaks, and the stress it caused for staff at the hospitals and jails, causing dozens to leave the field.

Still, data from DSHS shows demand for competency and restoration services was growing even before the pandemic.

In 2015, judges were ordering an average of 222 competency evaluations a month. By the end of 2019 that number jumped to 402 evaluations, and in 2022, the average has peaked at 558.

Restorations follow a similar trend. Since 2015, the number of restorations ordered has more than doubled from 75 to now 178 a month.

State officials like Dr. Thomas Kinlen, the director of the Office of Forensic Mental Health, the arm of DSHS tasked with providing people competency and restoration services, said they're not sure why this is happening. Kinlen hypothesized that contributing factors could include stronger drugs on the street, such as fentanyl and methamphetamine, and better mental health screenings at jails with attorneys more likely to recommend evaluations, among other things.

"We do not have a definitive answer," he said.

State officials tried to make space for the increasing demand by requiring state psychiatric hospitals to prioritize patients coming in through jails, under Gov. Jay Inslee's 2018 plan that aimed to move patients coming through the civil court system into small local mental health facilities.

Still, Kinlen said, the state hospitals end up housing many people who are found non-restorable, or too sick to ever stand trial, and considered a risk to release back into the community. These are known as "civil conversion" patients, and they often stay at state hospitals much longer than a patient who cycles through the criminal court system.

"One civil conversion basically knocks out [bed availability for] four competency individuals because they're not able to get to that same bed that would have been available," Kinlen explained.

There also are limits to the restoration treatment provided at state psychiatric hospitals. While treatment implies therapy, it by and large consists of medication and [classes](#) to teach defendants about how to communicate with their attorney and the roles of different court officials.

"Historically, that's a pretty low bar," said Kinlen. Restoration doesn't help defendants with things like anger management or vocational issues, either.

For Marsh, a resolution to his criminal case could be in sight: On Wednesday he was moved back to the Grays Harbor County Jail, and his lawyer expects he could be accepted into a diversion program soon that will help with mental health care and other social services. Still, the months in jail have led to new problems.

His mother, Lynda Marsh, said he is likely to lose his house, which is currently cited by the city of Ocean Shores as unfit for occupancy; there's scrap wood and metal in the front yard and Marsh hasn't been able to clean up or make repairs while he's been in jail. His driver's license expired during this last year, and he will need to file for disability in order to have a source of income.

He's also hoping to finally bury his father and grieve.

"It's just one great big mess," his mother said.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/07 Boston shootings leave 1 dead, 5 injured
SOURCE	https://www.cnn.com/2022/11/07/us/boston-shootings-investigation/index.html
GIST	<p>One person is dead and five others were wounded in three separate shootings reported within an hour across Boston neighborhoods Sunday night, prompting authorities to investigate whether the incidents are connected, police said.</p> <p>Boston police responded to the first shooting in the Mattapan neighborhood at 9:10 p.m. after receiving a radio call for two people who had been shot, according to a news release from the police department.</p> <p>Officers found two victims suffering from gunshot wounds at the scene, and they were taken to a hospital, where one male victim was pronounced dead. The second victim suffered non-life-threatening injuries, police added.</p>

	<p>Then about 30 minutes later, police responded to another shooting at 9:40 p.m. in the nearby neighborhood of Dorchester. They found an adult man suffering multiple gunshot wounds, and he was taken to a hospital where he's being treated for life-threatening injuries.</p> <p>At 9:45 p.m., another adult man was reported shot in Hyde Park, and he was taken to the hospital for non-life-threatening injuries. Shortly after, two additional gunshot victims of the same shooting took themselves to the hospital, police said.</p> <p>Boston Police Commissioner Michael Cox lamented the shootings Sunday, saying, "This is a pretty terrible evening in general."</p> <p>"Having six people within an hour, period, in multiple locations throughout the city is a terrible thing, no matter what time period it is, whether it's the worst crime period or one of the better ones in our history," Cox said during a news conference on Sunday night. "The only thing more troubling is our phones aren't ringing off the hook from people telling us what happened or what they might have seen or heard."</p> <p>No arrests were made Sunday in any of the shootings.</p>
	Return to Top

HEADLINE	11/05 Spain's largest seizure of marijuana
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/society/2022/nov/05/spanish-police-seize-largest-ever-amount-of-marijuana-worth-56m
GIST	<p>Marijuana with a street value of at least €64m (£56m) has been seized in Spain – the largest amount ever found – police said.</p> <p>Spanish police said they had seized 32 tonnes of packaged marijuana.</p> <p>Police raided farms and production plants across Spain in an operation called Gardens. They arrested nine men and 11 women, who were aged between 20 and 59.</p> <p>"The Civil Guard has seized the largest cache of packaged marijuana found so far," Spain's Civil Guard said. "It was equivalent to approximately 1.1m plants."</p> <p>Police said the gang dried the marijuana plants, packaged them and sent them to parts of Spain, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Germany and Belgium.</p> <p>The gang were detained in Toledo, Ciudad Real, Valencia and Asturias last month but details of the operation were only made public on Saturday.</p> <p>In June, the Spanish tax agency said, in reference to a different drug operation, that cannabis was worth "between 2,300 euros (£2,022) and 2,500 euros (£2,197) [a] kilogram".</p>
	Return to Top

HEADLINE	11/05 Climate activists storm Amsterdam airport
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/nov/05/climate-activists-storm-amsterdam-airport-and-block-private-jets
GIST	<p>Dutch border police arrested hundreds of climate activists who stormed Amsterdam's Schiphol airport and sat in front of the wheels of aircraft to prevent them from leaving.</p> <p>More than 100 protesters, wearing white suits, entered an area where private jets are kept on Saturday as part of a day of demonstrations in and around the airport organised by environmental groups.</p> <p>Dewi Zloch, the Netherlands campaign leader for Greenpeace, one of the groups involved, said: "We want fewer flights, more trains and a ban on unnecessary short-haul flights and private jets."</p>

Greenpeace says Schiphol is the largest source of carbon dioxide emissions in the Netherlands, emitting 12bn kilograms annually.

Extinction Rebellion was also involved in the action. Hundreds of other demonstrators in and around the airport's main hall carried signs saying "Restrict aviation" and "More trains".

About three hours after the protest began, border police started arresting activists, some of whom were dragged to waiting buses after passively resisting arrest, AFP reported.

"We take this very seriously," Dutch border police spokesperson Major Robert van Kapel said.

"These people are facing charges relating to being in a place where they should not have been," he said, adding that prosecutors will now formulate the exact charge.

The activists were taken to various border police offices around the airfield where they were being processed and identified, Van Kapel said.

Van Kapel said no commercial flights were affected by the protest.

There were also reports of border police tackling several activists on bicycles as they tried to escape.

Greenpeace said police were "far too heavy-handed against the activists on bicycles" and that at least one person received a head injury.

Responding to the protest, Schiphol said it aimed to become an emissions-free airport by 2030 and it supported targets for the aviation industry to reach net zero emissions by 2050.

On Friday, in response to an open letter from Greenpeace, Schiphol's new CEO, Ruud Sondag, conceded that change needed to happen faster.

The Dutch government announced plans in June to cap annual flights at the airport at 440,000, about 11% below 2019 levels, citing air pollution and climate concerns.

The transport minister, Mark Harbers, told parliament last month that his office could not control growing private jet traffic, and the government was considering whether to include the issue in its climate policy.

More than 120 world leaders are due to attend this year's UN climate talks at the Red Sea coastal resort of Sharm el-Sheikh, which start on Sunday.

Extinction Rebellion has been warning of the environmental impact of air travel for many years and in October 2019 a protester climbed on to a British Airways plane at London City airport and was seen lying on top of it. Other activists staged a sit-in at the airport entrance during the third day of protests in London at that time.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/06 Guilty plea: national fentanyl ring kingpin
SOURCE	https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/nov/6/kingpin-national-fentanyl-ring-pleads-guilty-michi/
GIST	<p>The kingpin of a nationwide fentanyl distribution ring pleaded guilty to drug trafficking charges Thursday after law enforcement officials had originally tracked him down by tracing the UPC code of a Playstation, according to federal prosecutors.</p> <p>The U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Michigan said that Maurice Montain McCoy, Jr., 41, of Moreno Valley, California, pleaded guilty to charges of drug trafficking and money laundering conspiracy stemming from a July 2017 raid by federal agents on a condo building in Novi, Michigan.</p>

	<p>Prosecutors said agents found a stash house after tracing the UPC code of a Playstation box that had previously been used to make a heroine delivery.</p> <p>The UPC code led them to an active Playstation in the condo building, where agents found more than 30 kilograms of fentanyl and over half a million dollars.</p> <p>At the time, the seizure was Michigan's largest for fentanyl and one of the largest in U.S. history.</p> <p>"More than 15 million deadly doses of fentanyl were seized from this organization — that is more than enough to kill the entire population of Michigan," U.S. Attorney Dawn Ison said in a press release.</p> <p>Following the seizure, the attorney's office said that authorities were able to make multiple arrests and additional contraband seizures in Indianapolis and Baltimore after identifying couriers who traveled throughout the U.S. making deliveries.</p> <p>Prosecutors said they charged 18 defendants for their roles in the drug ring, 16 of whom pleaded guilty. Two more defendants are scheduled for trial later this month.</p> <p>McCoy is an ex-con who served 10 years in a California federal prison on a drug conviction. He faces a mandatory minimum of 15 years and could land life in prison.</p> <p>McCoy is scheduled for sentencing in March.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	11/05 Haiti police break 2mo. gang blockade on fuel
SOURCE	https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/haitians-hope-fuel-supplies-after-police-break-up-gang-blockade-terminal-2022-11-05/
GIST	<p>PORT-AU-PRINCE, Nov 5 (Reuters) - Haitians on Saturday hoped for a quick return of fuel supplies after police broke up a gang blockade that for two months had left the economy without gasoline or diesel and triggered a humanitarian crisis.</p> <p>Haiti's National Police said in a statement late on Friday that it took back control of the Varreux fuel terminal, where the G9 gang coalition had dug trenches and set up barricades to prevent fuel distribution.</p> <p>Despite the police operation, it was still too soon say when trucks would be able to access an area that was the site of heavy shooting in confrontations between police and gangs on Thursday.</p> <p>"We don't know exactly when fuel deliveries will begin," said one source with knowledge of the situation. "Trucks need to have safe passage also."</p> <p>Haiti's fuel stocks have been running low as importers struggled to get paid for subsidies that keep fuel prices low on the Caribbean nation, and due to difficulties in obtaining dollars from the central bank, sources have told Reuters.</p> <p>The gasoline and diesel shortages had halted almost all economic activity, including in transportation and hospitals, and forced many local business owners to shut operations.</p> <p>Last month, the United Nations warned that the country was facing acute food insecurity. read more</p> <p>The coalition of Haitian gangs demanded the resignation of Prime Minister Ariel Henry, who has run the country since shortly after the assassination of President Jovenel Moise last year.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	11/05 Activists glue selves to Goya paintings
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SOURCE	https://www.reuters.com/business/cop/activists-glue-themselves-goya-paintings-spanish-climate-protest-2022-11-05/
GIST	<p>MADRID, Nov 5 (Reuters) - Climate activists glued their hands to the frames of two world-famous paintings by Spanish master Francisco de Goya in Madrid's Prado museum on Saturday, the latest in a string of protests targeting artworks across Europe.</p> <p>A man and a woman attached themselves to Goya's "La Maja Vestida" (The Clothed Maja) and his "La Maja Desnuda" (The Naked Maja), and painted "+1.5 C" on the wall between the two works, video footage showed.</p> <p>Campaign group Futuro Vegetal said its members carried out the protest.</p> <p>"Last week the UN recognised the impossibility of keeping us below the limit of 1.5 Celsius (set in the 2016 Paris climate agreement). We need change now," it wrote on Twitter.</p> <p>Groups of climate activists have mounted a series of similar protests in recent weeks in the build-up to the COP27 climate change conference in Egypt.</p> <p>Protesters tried to glue themselves to the glass covering Vermeer's "Girl with a Pearl Earring" in The Hague and others threw soup over Van Gogh's "The Sower" in Rome and one of his Sunflowers paintings in London. Both of those works were also covered.</p> <p>The Prado said its paintings, created at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries, had not been damaged, and the graffiti on the wall was quickly painted over.</p> <p>"We condemn the use of the museum as a place to make a political protest of any kind," the gallery added.</p> <p>Police said two people had been arrested.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	11/06 Arizona election workers face threats
SOURCE	https://www.reuters.com/world/us/kill-them-arizona-election-workers-face-midterm-threats-2022-11-06/
GIST	<p>Nov 6 (Reuters) - Election workers in Arizona's most fiercely contested county faced more than 100 violent threats and intimidating communications in the run-up to Tuesday's midterms, most of them based on election conspiracy theories promoted by former President Donald Trump and his allies.</p> <p>The harassment in Maricopa County included menacing emails and social media posts, threats to circulate personal information online and photographing employees arriving at work, according to nearly 1,600 pages of documents obtained by Reuters through a public records request for security records and correspondence related to threats and harassments against election workers.</p> <p>Between July 11 and Aug. 22, the county election office documented at least 140 threats and other hostile communications, the records show. "You will all be executed," said one. "Wire around their limbs and tied & dragged by a car," wrote another.</p> <p>The documents reveal the consequences of election conspiracy theories as voters nominated candidates in August to compete in the midterms. Many of the threats in Maricopa County, which helped propel President Joe Biden to victory over Trump in 2020, cited debunked claims around fake ballots, rigged voting machines and corrupt election officials.</p> <p>Other jurisdictions nationwide have seen threats and harassment this year by the former president's supporters and prominent Republican figures who question the legitimacy of the 2020 election, according to interviews with Republican and Democratic election officials in 10 states.</p>

The threats come at a time of growing concern over the risk of political violence, highlighted by the Oct. 28 attack on Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's husband by a man who embraced right-wing conspiracy theories.

In Maricopa, a county of 4.5 million people that includes Phoenix, the harassment unnerved some election workers, according to previously unreported incidents documented in the emails and interviews with county officials.

A number of temporary workers quit after being accosted outside the main ballot-counting center following the Aug. 2 primary, Stephen Richer, the county recorder who helps oversee Maricopa's elections, said in an interview. One temporary employee broke down in tears after a stranger photographed her, according to an email from Richer to county officials. The unidentified worker left work early and never returned.

She wasn't a political person, she told Richer. She just wanted a job.

On Aug. 3, strangers in tactical gear calling themselves "First Amendment Auditors" circled the elections department building, pointing cameras at employees and their vehicle license plates. The people vowed to continue the surveillance through the midterms, according to an Aug. 4 email from Scott Jarrett, Maricopa's elections director, to county officials.

"It feels very much like predatory behavior and that we are being stalked," wrote Jarrett.

ATTACKS PERSISTED

Since the 2020 election, Reuters has documented more than 1,000 intimidating messages to election officials across the country, including more than 120 that could warrant prosecution, according to legal experts.

Many officials said they had hoped the harassment would wane over time after the 2020 results were confirmed. But the attacks have persisted, fueled in many cases by right-wing media figures and groups that continue without evidence to cast election officials as complicit in a vast conspiracy by China, Democratic officials and voting equipment manufacturers to rob Trump of a second presidential term.

In April, local election officials in Arizona participated in a drill simulating violence at a polling site in which several people were killed, according to an April 26 email from Lisa Marra, the president of the Election Officials of Arizona, which represents election administrators from the state's 15 counties. The drill aimed to help officials prepare for Election Day violence, and left participants "understandably, disturbed" said the email to more than a dozen local election directors.

In a statement, Marra said: "This is just one other tool we can use to ensure election safety for all."

Maricopa officials appeared at times overwhelmed by threatening posts on social media and right-wing message boards calling for workers to be executed or hung. Some messages sought officials' home addresses, including one that promised "late night visits." Employees were filmed arriving and leaving work, according to emails among county officials.

Two days after the Aug. 2 primary election, the county's information security officer emailed the FBI pleading for help.

"I appreciate the limitations of what the FBI can do, but I just want to underline this," wrote Michael Moore, information security officer for the Maricopa County Recorder's Office. "Our staff is being intimidated and threatened," he added. "We're going to continue to find it more and more difficult to get the job done when no one wants to work for elections."

A special agent for the FBI acknowledged the agency's limitations, according to the emails. "As you put it, we are limited in what we can do - we only investigate violations of federal law," the FBI agent

responded in an Aug. 4 email. Reporting threats to local law enforcement is "the only thing I can suggest," the agent wrote, "even if at this point it has not resulted in any action."

The FBI declined to comment on the agent's response to Moore. It also declined to confirm or deny the existence of ongoing investigations into the threats.

Moore did not respond to requests for comment, but Richer, his boss, said in a statement that he greatly appreciated the FBI's partnership and vigilance. "This is an inherently emotional topic - communications of the most vile nature have been repeatedly sent to my team," the statement said.

One anonymous sender using the privacy-protective email service ProtonMail sent "harassing emails" for almost a year, Moore, wrote in an Aug. 4 email to the FBI. One message warned Richer that he'd be "hung as a traitor."

"I'd like to have a black and white poster in my office of you hanging from the end of a rope," the sender wrote.

The harassment and threats were affecting the mental health of election workers, Jarrett wrote in his Aug. 4 memo. "If our permanent and temporary staff do not feel safe, we will not be able (to) recruit and retain staff for upcoming elections."

In all, county officials referred at least 100 messages and social media posts to FBI and state counter-terrorism officials. Reuters found no evidence in the correspondence that officials saw any of the messages as breaching the expansive definition of constitutionally protected free speech and crossing into the territory of a prosecutable threat.

The U.S. Justice Department declined to comment on specific ongoing investigations but said it has opened dozens of cases nationwide involving threats to election workers. Eight people face federal charges for threats, including two who targeted Maricopa County officials.

DOJ spokesperson Joshua Stueve said that while the "overwhelming majority" of complaints the agency receives "do not include a threat of unlawful violence," he said the messages are "often hostile, harassing, and abusive" towards election officials and their staff. "They deserve better," Stueve said.

ONLINE INSPIRATION

Misinformation on right-wing websites and social media fueled much of the hostility towards election staff, according to the internal messages among Maricopa officials.

On July 31, the Gateway Pundit, a pro-Trump website with a history of publishing false stories, reported that a Maricopa County election official allowed a staff technician to gain unauthorized access to a computer server room, where he deleted 2020 election data that was set to be audited. The website published the names and photos of the official and the tech; readers responded with threats against both.

"Until we start hanging these evil doers nothing will change," one reader wrote in the Gateway Pundit's comment section. Another suggested death for the computer tech identified in the story: "hang that crook from (the) closest tree so people can see what happens to traitors."

The tech hadn't deleted anything, according to a Maricopa spokesperson. The county election director had instructed him to shut down the server for delivery to the Arizona State Senate in response to a subpoena. A review of server records confirmed nothing was deleted, the spokesperson told Reuters, and all data from the 2020 election had been archived and preserved months earlier.

Election employees singled out in Gateway Pundit stories "tend to see a surge in being targeted" for threats and harassing messages, Moore, the county's information security officer, said in a Nov. 18, 2021, email to the FBI. Those stories, he added, are often "flagrantly inaccurate." A Reuters investigation

published last December found the Gateway Pundit cited in more than 100 threatening and hostile communications directed at 25 election workers in the year after the 2020 election.

Other right-wing news outlets and commentators elicited similar hostile comments in response to their allegations against Maricopa officials. In August, right-wing provocateur Charlie Kirk posted a comment in Telegram accusing Richer, the county recorder, and “his cronies” of making Arizona’s elections “a Third-World circus.”

“When do we start hanging these people for treason?” one reader commented. Another simply added, “Kill them.”

The Gateway Pundit and Kirk did not respond to requests for comment.

After a security assessment by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security in late 2021, Maricopa strengthened doors, added shatterproof film on windows and bought more first aid kits, according to the documents.

But the harassment has continued.

“This goes beyond just onsite security. It is a mental health issue,” Jarrett, the county elections director, wrote in an email to county officials two days after the primary.

“I very much respect freedom of speech and welcome public scrutiny,” Jarrett added. “However, allowing this predatory activity to occur is damaging and threatening the viability of the elections department.”

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/06 Iran soldier kills 3 police, fellow soldier
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/article/iran-middle-east-dubai-united-arab-emirates-tehran-e41b63270f6479f5c69f778aab4ed07f
GIST	<p>DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — A soldier shot to death three policemen and a fellow soldier at a roadside police station in southern Iran on Sunday, the semiofficial Tasnim news agency reported.</p> <p>The violence took place near the town of Bampur, about 1,260 kilometers, (780 miles) southeast of the capital Tehran in the restive Sistan and Baluchistan province.</p> <p>The southeastern province was gripped by unrest on Friday, drawing a lethal response from security forces and an activist group claimed they killed at least 16 people. It came in the seventh week of anti-government protests sparked by the death in custody of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini, who was detained after allegedly violating the country’s strict dress code for women.</p> <p>Tasnim cited a local police commander to report that the soldier opened fire after a dispute with another soldier over personal issues. The soldier was detained immediately. There were no additional details.</p> <p>Such shootings are rare in Iran. In 2016 a soldier killed himself after shooting to death three of his comrades. Military service of up to 24 months is mandatory for men aged 19 and above in Iran.</p> <p>Separately on Sunday, Tasnim reported that a “terrorist” was killed during an attack by two assailants on a station staffed by the elite paramilitary Revolutionary Guard in the city of Mahshahr in southwestern Khuzestan province. There were no other details.</p> <p>Protests embroiling the country that began after Amini’s death first focused on the state-mandated headscarf, or hijab. But they swiftly morphed into one of the biggest challenges to the government since the 1979 Islamic Revolution. Protesters chant for overthrowing the clerical rule and the death of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.</p>

	Security forces, including paramilitary volunteers with the Revolutionary Guard, have violently cracked down on the demonstrations, killing over 300 people, including 41 children, according to the Oslo-based Iran Human Rights.
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	11/06 Philippines bus bomb kills 1, wounds 10
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/article/bombings-philippines-d1a07bde948a9401b1b8a1a9614ab8ff
GIST	<p>COTABATO, Philippines (AP) — A homemade bomb went off in a bus and killed a passenger and wounded 10 others in a southern Philippine city on Sunday in an attack authorities suspect may be part of an extortion attempt, officials said.</p> <p>The bus with an unspecified number of passengers was approaching a transport terminal in Tacurong city in Sultan Kudarat province when the bomb went off at the back of the vehicle shortly before noon, police said.</p> <p>Investigators were trying to determine if the attackers were from the same armed group that had staged similar bombings in past years to extort money from the Yellow Bus Line, which operates in key southern cities, military and police officials said.</p> <p>Regional army commander Maj. Gen. Roy Galido said the bus company “has been constantly receiving extortion messages.” The military and police have been working with the bus owners to capture the extortionists, who may have been angered by the bus company’s refusal to pay off, Galido said.</p> <p>Police have blamed the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters, a small rebel force that has aligned itself with the Islamic State group, for similar bus bombings in the past.</p> <p>In a separate attack, about 15 members of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters opened fire on soldiers guarding repair works on a flood-damaged bridge in Datu Hoffer town in southern Maguindanao province Friday night, Galido said. He condemned the attack, which killed a soldier and wounded two others.</p> <p>Troops were hunting down the attackers, he said.</p> <p>The group broke off years ago from the Moro Islamic Liberation Front when the latter entered into peace talks with the government and embraced an offer of Muslim autonomy in a five-province region in the south of the largely Roman Catholic nation.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	11/06 Philadelphia bar shooting: 9 wounded
SOURCE	https://www.cnn.com/2022/11/06/us/philadelphia-kensington-shooting/index.html
GIST	<p>Authorities are seeking multiple individuals suspected of firing into a crowd outside a Philadelphia bar Saturday night, wounding at least nine people, according to police.</p> <p>The incident occurred just before 11 p.m. ET in the neighborhood of Kensington, First Deputy Commissioner John Stanford of the Philadelphia Police Department said at a news conference early Sunday.</p> <p>“Multiple suspects” jumped out of a vehicle and opened fire on a crowd outside, Stanford said, then fled in the vehicle.</p> <p>The individuals “may have spotted someone that they wanted to shoot at, exited the vehicle and just begun firing at the group of individuals that were there,” Stanford said. Police are working to establish a possible motive.</p>

	<p>All nine adult victims were transported to a local hospital. Two of the wounded are in critical condition and the other seven are in stable condition, Stanford said.</p> <p>The shooting took place in a high traffic area that was heavily patrolled by officers on Saturday night, he said. A narcotics strike force had been carrying out an operation further along the block earlier Saturday evening and officers from the team heard the shots.</p> <p>“We have some brazen individuals in this city that don’t care. They don’t care how many police officers are out here and some of them don’t care in terms of how many people are out here,” Stanford said.</p> <p>At least 40 pieces of ballistic evidence have been recovered, he said.</p> <p>The gunmen were seen exiting a black-colored vehicle and police have asked those in the area to assist with additional information. It had been a warm evening with many people out on the streets and there were a number of businesses near the scene of the shooting, Stanford said.</p> <p>“We’ll try to gather video and hopefully be able to get some additional information as well as video surveillance that may be able to help us identify who was responsible for this,” he said. “This is an area that’s always busy.”</p>
	Return to Top

HEADLINE	11/05 Deputy-involved shooting in Bonney Lake
SOURCE	https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/investigation-underway-after-deputy-involved-shooting-bonney-lake/KOPFUKI53FHOZM5KPJTYFWBDYI/
GIST	<p>BONNEY LAKE, Wash. — The Pierce County Force Investigation Team will be investigating after a deputy was involved in a shooting in Bonney Lake early Saturday morning.</p> <p>At about 4:50 a.m., deputies with the Pierce County Sheriff’s Department responded to a reported incident involving a suspect armed with a weapon at 117th Street East and 203rd Avenue East.</p> <p>A few minutes after they arrived on the scene, deputies called out “shots fired,” according to PCSD.</p> <p>The suspect surrendered shortly afterward and was transported to a hospital with minor injuries.</p> <p>No deputies were injured in this incident.</p> <p>PCFIT will be providing updates on this incident as its investigation proceeds.</p>
	Return to Top

HEADLINE	11/05 ‘Chaotic’ shooting in Chinatown restaurant
SOURCE	https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/2-arrested-after-chaotic-shooting-inside-chinatown-international-district-restaurant/YABMSSS4URAXPNESHZ2RNCFSZA/
GIST	<p>SEATTLE — Seattle police say they’re “attempting to untangle a chaotic scene” after an argument led to a shooting inside a restaurant in the Chinatown-International District.</p> <p>Police responded to the restaurant located in the 200 block of South King Street at about 12:30 a.m. Saturday after witnesses called to report the incident.</p> <p>Arriving officers spoke with witnesses who told them that two women were “arguing over an ex-boyfriend and perceived slight” just before the shooting broke out.</p> <p>Police did not release surveillance video of this incident, but shared a detailed description of the events captured by the video, along with a disclaimer: “We know this is confusing so just bear with us.”</p> <p><i>The video shows Woman 1 approaching Woman 2 while she is sitting at the bar.</i></p>

Woman 1 then assaults Woman 2, which causes a physical fight.

Man 2 and Man 1 approach the two female subjects, before Man 1 assaults Woman 2 from behind. Man 2 then gets in a physical altercation with Man 1.

At some point in the video, Man 2 and Man 1 are separated and Man 2 appears to pull a knife out of his pocket.

Man 2 assaults Man 1 from behind with what appears to be stabbing motions to Man 1's back.

A bystander then takes Man 2 to the ground and holds him down there.

Man 3 appears, with his firearm aimed toward Man 2 who has the knife at this time.

While Man 2 is being held down on the ground, Man 1 approaches Man 2 and shoots him.

Man 1 then approaches Man 3, who is exiting the building.

Man 3 then shoots Man 1.

The two men who were directly involved in the physical altercation were arrested by police.

They are being treated for injuries at Harborview Medical Center and will be booked into King County Jail once they are released from the hospital.

The third man involved in this incident was not arrested and had a valid concealed carry permit, according to police. His firearm was taken as evidence.

The investigation into this incident is ongoing.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	11/04 Jails rife w/violence, abuse, overcrowding
SOURCE	https://www.seattlepi.com/news/article/US-jails-rife-with-violence-abuse-and-17558939.php
GIST	<p>In California, lawyers accused staff at the Los Angeles County jail of chaining mentally ill detainees to chairs for days at a time. In West Virginia, people held in the Southern Regional Jail sued the state, saying they found urine and semen in their food. In Missouri, detainees in the St. Louis jail staged multiple uprisings last year, while in Texas, a guard at Houston's overcrowded Harris County Jail said she and her coworkers had started carrying knives to work for fear that they wouldn't have backup if violence broke out.</p> <p>And while the infamous Rikers Island jail complex in New York City has been the focus of media coverage for its surging number of deaths, rural and urban lockups from Tennessee to Washington to Georgia are not faring much better.</p> <p>In other words, America's jails are a mess.</p> <p>"It's hard to believe, but it seems jails are even more wretched than usual these last few months," said David Fathi, director of the American Civil Liberties Union's National Prison Project. "Having worked in this field for 30 years, I don't remember any other time when there seem to be so many large jails in a state of complete meltdown."</p> <p>Several lockups denied claims about deteriorating conditions or did not respond to requests for comment. A few, including Rikers, acknowledged problems such as infrastructure issues, detainee deaths and high staff attrition.</p>

“We are working hard to stem the rippling effect of years of mismanagement and neglect within our city’s jails,” a spokesperson for the New York City Department of Correction, which runs Rikers, said in a statement. “Turning our jails around requires a collaborative effort, transparency and time.”

Unlike prisons, most jails are funded and managed locally, so the problems they face can vary widely from one county to the next. While there’s crumbling infrastructure in Atlanta’s Fulton County Jail, there’s been murky brown drinking water in Seattle’s King County Jail and overcrowding in Houston because of a backlog in the court system.

But more than a dozen employees, detainees and experts who spoke with The Marshall Project and The Associated Press highlighted two problems they’ve seen at jails across the country: too many people incarcerated, and not enough guards.

“Our jail facilities are at capacity,” said David Cuevas, president of the Harris County Sheriff’s Office deputies’ union. “It is truly not safe.”

The twin issues of overcrowding and understaffing have plagued jails across the country for years, and even before the pandemic many facilities were in disarray. Yet in the months after COVID-19 hit, the number of people in local lockups plummeted. People stayed home and committed fewer crimes. Police did not make as many arrests. Courts reduced bail. And jails let more people go home early. Nationally, the number of people in jail decreased by about 25% by the summer of 2020, according to data compiled by the federal Bureau of Justice Statistics.

But as concern about the virus faded, so did many of the measures designed to combat it — and soon jail populations began to rise. By the summer of 2022, many lockups held more people than they had in years, or became so overcrowded that detainees were forced to sleep on floors, in underground tunnels or in common areas without toilets.

“Everyone is on edge because it is crowded,” one man detained in Los Angeles wrote in a sworn declaration filed as part of a lawsuit by the American Civil Liberties Union. “The place smells of urine and excrement because some toilets don’t work, and people who are chained to chairs sometimes pee on the floor because the deputies won’t unchain them.”

Celia Banos, whose son was one of the people chained to a bench for several days, told The Marshall Project that she was shocked to learn how little the jail had done to take care of him.

“His condition has deteriorated in there,” Banos said. Though her son — who has schizophrenia — has been incarcerated before, she said this time the jail seemed to be getting worse.

Some jails found that they still needed to use isolated cells to quarantine potentially sick prisoners. A jail official in Houston said that meant cells that once held two or three people might only be able to hold one, and detainees with a record of violence couldn’t be separated from the general population as easily.

But even as the number of detainees increased, the number of guards did not. Just like state prisons, many local lockups saw a rise in officer vacancies — sometimes even at facilities that appeared fully staffed on paper. The City, a nonprofit news outlet in New York, reported last year that more than 1,000 Rikers Island guards were calling out sick every day due to a frequently abused policy allowing unlimited sick leave.

“The things that led to the Great Resignation were happening in jails, too: It was a depressing time, and lots of people were getting sick,” Vincent Schiraldi, a former New York City jail commissioner, said in an interview.

The guards’ union has disputed that members overuse sick leave, saying they are legitimately absent, often due to on-the-job injuries and exhaustion. In October, the jail said it still had as many as 800 employees out at a time.

With fewer officers, those who remain are often forced to work longer hours, including double, triple and even quadruple shifts. Guards in Cleveland said they didn't have time to eat, while some jail workers in Houston reported urinating in bags when they couldn't find someone to replace them at their posts.

Having fewer jail employees can also make life worse for detainees because there are fewer workers to let them out of their cells, take them to court, teach their educational programs or tend to their most basic needs.

In Houston, a man in one of the jail's isolation units said violence sometimes broke out after guards didn't let them out to shower for days at a time, while in Philadelphia — at a lockup with a 36% staff vacancy rate — incarcerated people said they couldn't always get meals or toilet paper. (A jail spokesman "categorically denied" that allegation.) In Ohio, local media reported that guards at Cleveland's Cuyahoga County Jail have taken to locking people in their cells 23 hours a day because there aren't enough staff.

And in one extreme example, a man detained at the Oklahoma County jail in Oklahoma City is accused of raping a handcuffed woman after guards at the understaffed facility left them unsupervised during booking. A detention officer at the troubled facility, which the county took over from the sheriff two years ago, eventually intervened, and the man was later charged with first-degree rape. A jail official said that no disciplinary measures against staff have been announced, but the matter is still under investigation.

According to Andrea Armstrong, a law professor at Loyola University New Orleans who studies deaths in jails and prisons, staffing problems are particularly dangerous when it comes to medical care.

"We are seeing increased mortality in jails, and they are the types of deaths that could have been avoided if the person had better access to emergency care," she said.

In February, a man at Rikers Island choked on an orange and died after staff failed to intervene in time. He was one of eighteen people who have died in the city's jails this year. Two months later, a detainee at the jail in Anoka County, Minnesota, died in his cell after the guards could not find any medical staff on duty to save him. In Houston, the family of a man who caught COVID-19 and died alone in his cell last year sued the jail. According to the family's lawyer, U.A. Lewis, none of the staff noticed the man was dead until officers came to get him for a visit.

Despite the consensus among experts that conditions are deteriorating in many lockups, there's far less agreement on solutions. While jails officials said they needed basic infrastructure improvements and more staff, some prisoner advocates point out that more lenient bail policies could help ensure fewer people stay behind bars when they don't have money to pay for their freedom.

In the meantime, researchers say they need better information from the jails to be able to measure the scope of the problem.

"There's so little data out there," said Michele Deitch, a law professor at the University of Texas at Austin who studies jails and prisons. "We literally do not have the means to assess the safety or dangerousness of a facility in any comparative way."

Some of the starkest examples of poor conditions — like semen-tainted food or brown drinking water — aren't easy to measure.

Even for those things that can be measured — like overcrowding, understaffing or an increase in jail deaths — the available numbers are often years delayed and unreliable. For example, the U.S. Department of Justice said that its annual in-custody death reports undercounted jail deaths by at least 39%. And although the federal government issues an annual report about the number of people in jails nationwide, the most recent data is more than two years old.

	<p>Experts said that lack of data makes it hard to say how much of the growing alarm now actually reflects a change in jail conditions and how much is the result of heightened interest from media and the public.</p> <p>But they say that so far, that increased concern has not translated into better conditions.</p> <p>“It is horrible in here,” another detainee in Los Angeles wrote in a sworn declaration. “In fact, it is worse than being homeless. Even when I sleep on the streets, there is some room to stretch out. But in here, there are so many people walking by you or sleeping next to you that I’d rather be on the streets.”</p>
Return to Top	

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[Return to Top](#)